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■ World/A10 Al-Qaida group claims Riyadh car bomb attack

■ Business/B1 IMF upgrades growth outlook for Philippines

■ Metro/A23 Businessman dies in Pajero blast

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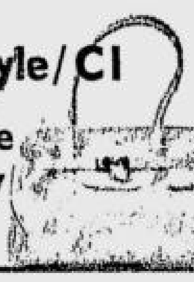

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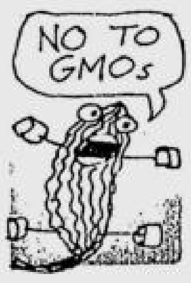

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OH, MY/A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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PINOY TWINS/ A7

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Friday, April 23, 2004 ★★ 66 pages / 7 sections / vol. 19 / no. 135 P18

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BISHOP/ A22

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FPJ/ A22

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FILIPINO/ A21

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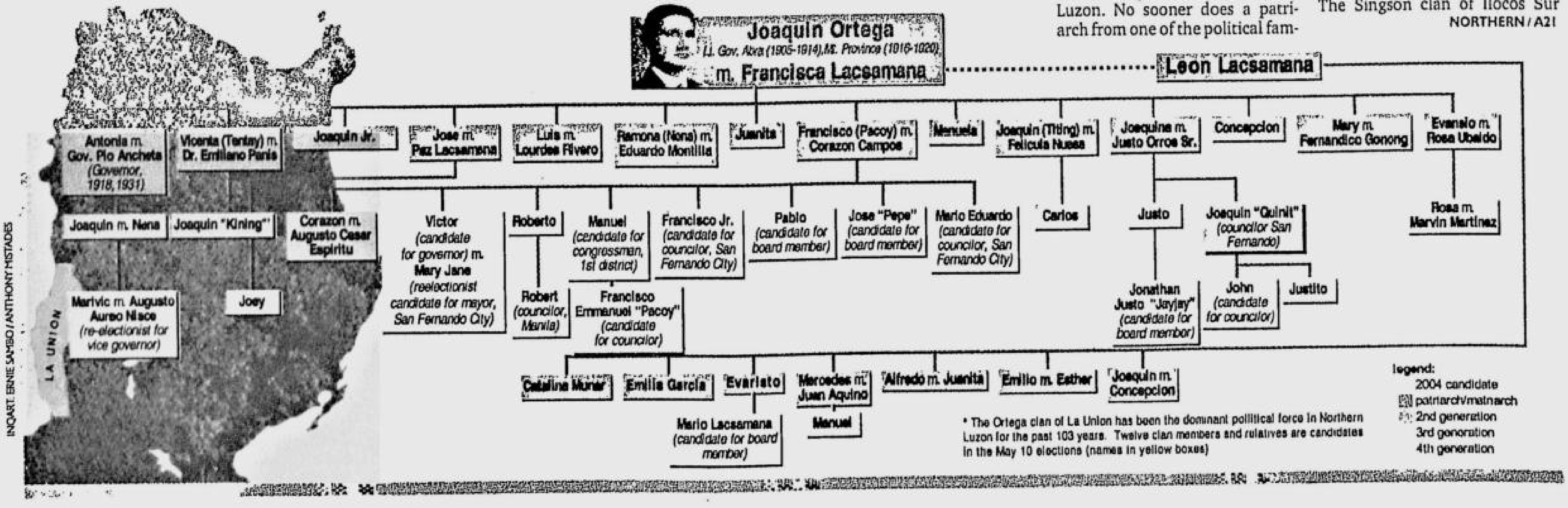
NORTHERN / A21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INQART: ERNIE SAMBO/ANTHONY HISTADES

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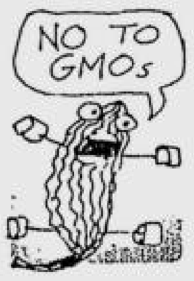

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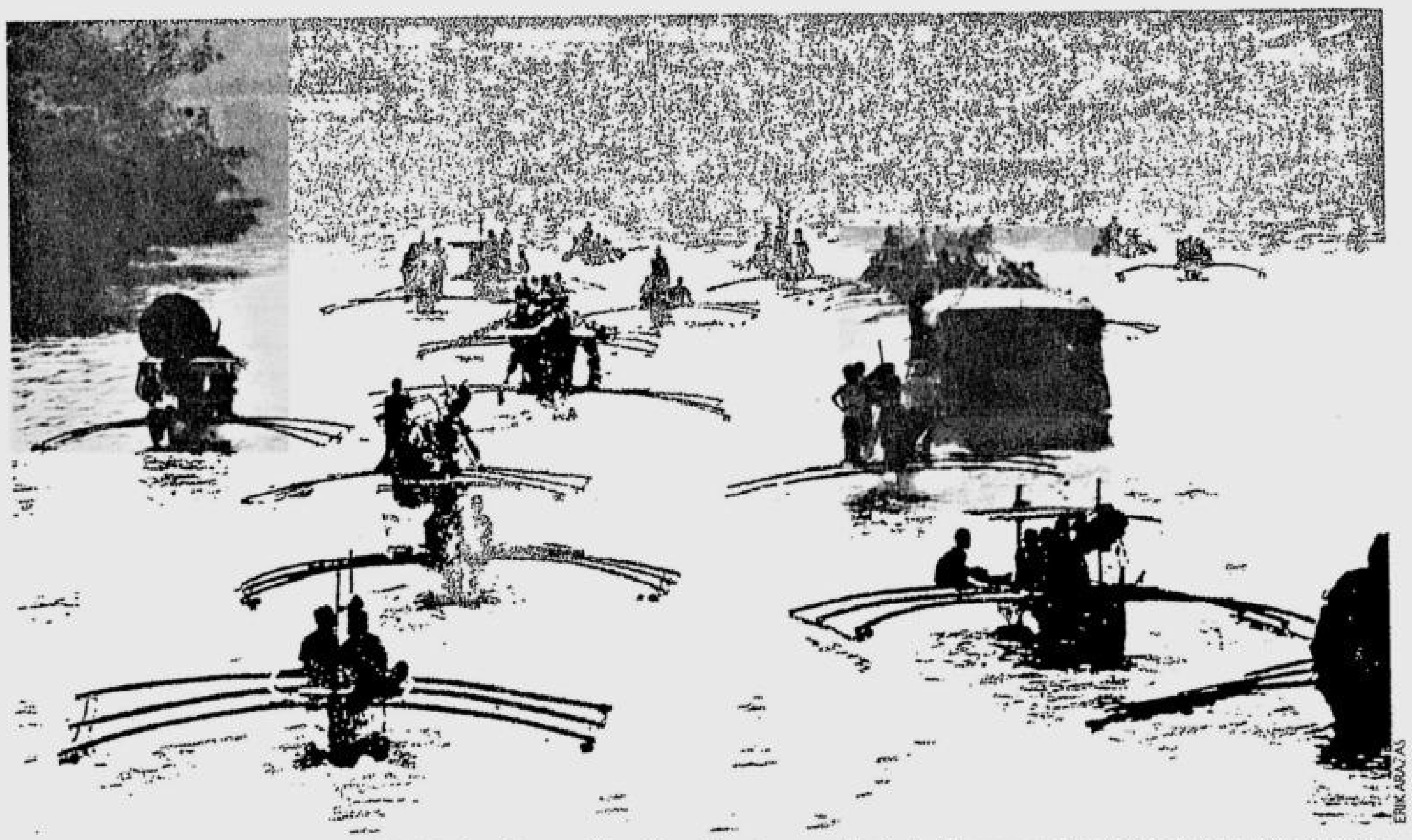

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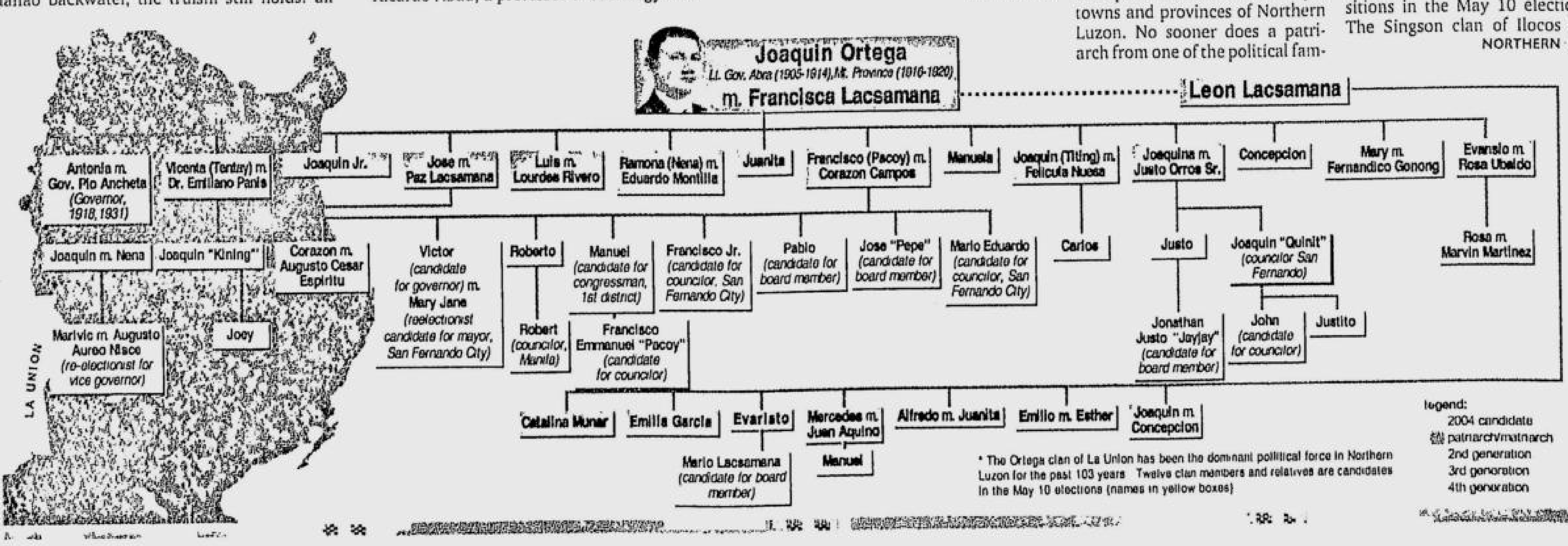
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INQART ERNIE SAMBO / ANTHONY MISTADES

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms mostly over Visayas and Mindanao.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/23/04

Big business groups back GMA

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE COUNTRY'S biggest business organizations are rallying behind the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo as the campaign period enters the homestretch and the presidential race appears to be narrowing to two major contenders.

"I would say that a lot or most of the business groups in the country are for the President," Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive vice president Donald Dee told reporters yesterday after the President addressed the 25th National Conference of Employers at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

Aside from the PCCI, the business groups that attended the conference were the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FFCCCI), the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop) and the Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI).

"Everybody is talking about what we will do after the elections, so we are assuming that we are talking to the same president (in the next term)," Dee said.

Before the President delivered her speech, Ecop chair Miguel Varela told the audience he had a "gut feeling" Ms Macapagal would be in office longer.

Ecop president Rene Soriano told the President she only had to say the word and the business community would immediately respond to her call for support.

Businessman William Gatchalian, a member of ousted President Joseph Estrada's "midnight Cabinet," said he was supporting Ms Macapagal this time around because he felt she was doing a good job. "The times are changing and it looks good," Gatchalian said.

Last week, Makati Business Club chair Ricardo Romulo, who had a well-publicized tiff with the President last year, noted that nearly half of the influential group's members thought the President was the most capable person to run the country.

"At this point, there are really only two main candidates. One aspires to be our leader because his heart is in the right place... the other stakes her claim to another term on the basis of her track record which speaks for itself," Romulo said in his remarks at an MBC forum on April 15.

Dee said the business groups were throwing their support behind the President not only because of her recent surge in the surveys but because of "the positive developments in the currency and stock markets."

FFCCCI president Robin Sy said his group had always been for the administration ticket even as it left it to its individual members to make their own choices.

FFCCCI executive vice president Francis Chua said he could sense a marked shift to Ms Macapagal with the recent release of positive economic data and the strengthening of the peso.

Lakas sees silver lining in Ibon poll

By Cynthia D. Balana
and Norman Bordadora

PRO-ADMINISTRATION Lakas-CMD congressmen have a curious way of reading the latest Ibon Foundation survey that showed opposition candidates Fernando Poe Jr. and Loren Legarda leading in the presidential and vice presidential races, respectively.

Cebu Rep. Joseph Ace Durano said what the survey actually showed was an upsurge in President Macapagal-Arroyo's rating and a downtrend in Poe's.

In the very least, Durano said, it indicated a surmountable level in the narrow gap between Poe and Ms Macapagal and validated other surveys that showed the President's capability to pull away from the tight race.

While the President's ratings jumped from 16.05 percent to 18.6 percent or by 2.55 percent, he added, Poe's rating slumped by 3.74 percent or from 30.04 to 26.30 percent.

Durano's conclusion: "There's no way but up for the President. In contrast, Poe is heading for the worst."

Candidate to beat

Pointing out that Ibon Foundation has always been critical of the administration, Zamboanga del Sur Rep. Isidoro Real Jr. said: "Even the President's critics now recognize that she remains the candidate to beat." On the contrary, "the opposition has been self-destructing through mudslinging and black propaganda."

In Agusan del Sur, presidential aspirant Sen. Panfilo Lacson yesterday stood his ground about dismissing pre-election surveys even after the latest Ibon poll found he was gaining ground.

However, the senator subscribed to Ibon's analysis that he and Poe should join forces and field just one presidential bet for the opposition to beat the incumbent Ms Macapagal. "There's no need for a survey to know that," Lacson said in the middle of campaign sorties.

He and Poe were scheduled to meet one-on-one for unity talks last Monday but conflicting schedules kept them apart.

"I'll be in Manila (next) Monday," Lacson said. "I hope we can meet then."

Eddie Gil wants SC to cite Comelec for contempt

By Philip C. Tubeza

CITE the Commission on Elections for contempt, businessman Eddie Gil asked the Supreme Court yesterday, for not including him in the list of official candidates for president.

In a five-page omnibus motion, Gil said the Comelec en banc, "especially" Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., "should be required to explain why they should not be held (liable) for making a mockery out of judicial process."

The in-today-out-tomorrow Gil made the move as ING Bank N.V. in Amsterdam, The (Netherlands) denied issuing a certificate that he has a $10-billion deposit with them. One such certificate allegedly sent by the bank to the SC became the basis of a status quo order issued on April 13.

Gil insisted that the ruling made him an official candidate again. So why wasn't his name in the sample ballots that the poll body printed? He said Manuel Santos, executive vice president of Partido Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa party wrote Abalos on April 15 to request this, "to no avail."

The Comelec's retort: its ruling that declared Gil a nuisance candidate had become final and executory before the candidate appealed his case before the high court.

SD Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban announced yesterday that the court is set to meet on Tuesday to resolve all major election-related cases pending before it.

In a statement sent to the INQUIRER, the Dutch bank said "a purportedly certificate of deposit in the name of Eddie Gil dated Feb. 26, 2004 is not authentic, nor was issued by ING Bank N.V. in the Netherlands."

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Upon graduating with distinction or topping any professional regulatory exam, Pacific Education Plan scholars are entitled to receive a refund of up to 100% of their plan value through Pacific Plans' Scholastic Achievement Awards.

Initial list of scholastic achievers for school year 2003-2004:

SCHOLAR	LEVEL	DISTINCTION	SCHOOL
Marichu D. Doza	College	Magna Cum Laude	University of St. La Salle - Bacolod
Jefferson V. Cabral	High School	Valedictorian	St. Mary's Academy, Pasay
Katherine Marie M. Cadeliña	High School	Valedictorian	Colegio San Agustin
Therese Ann R. dela Torre	High School	Valedictorian	Manresa School
Erica Francine T. Faylona	High School	Valedictorian	St. Scholastica's College
Manneth N. Magnifico	High School	Valedictorian	St. Joseph School
Brittany Aine Ngo	High School	Valedictorian	Lorenzo Ruiz Academy
Freya P. Pacis	High School	Valedictorian	Mater Ecclesiae School
Elaine C. Vegafria	High School	Valedictorian	Colegio de San Pascual Baylon
Monica C. Diomampo	Elementary	Valedictorian	Ville St. John Academy
Angelica Beata T. Kalaw	Elementary	Valedictorian	St. Therese of the Child Jesus Academy
Christine Marie Uy	Elementary	Valedictorian	Cebu Cherish School

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Firm creates software to run Windows programs for free

A PHILIPPINE-BASED company Thursday unveiled software that would allow Windows-based programs to run on computers using the rival Linux operating system.

Peter Valdes, chief technology officer of SpecOps Labs Inc., said his company's software would help millions of users to "migrate" from Windows machines to the free and open source Linux platform, which he claimed was more reliable.

"After you install the bridge software ... it is as if you have a Windows OS (operating system) on your desktop," he said.

Valdes noted that one big obstacle to propagating the use of Linux was the massive expense required to retrain Windows applications users.

Previous attempts to run Windows word processors, spreadsheets and other applications smoothly on Linux machines had been largely unsuccessful and cumbersome, he said.

Asked to comment on the SpecOps' new software, Microsoft Philippines' spokesperson Mae Rivera told Dow Jones Newswires: "We know very little about it. We can only give our comment when we know more about that software."

Frederick Lewis, SpecOps' American chief executive officer, said the software would be available commercially by the end of the year.

Lewis, a former member of the US military's elite Delta Force, said the price of the software, code-named "David," had not yet been set, but promised it would be "dramatically lower" than Windows.

"David will level the OS (operating system) industries battlefield. It will free consumers from the bonds of MS Windows, and give them the freedom to use the OS of their choice," SpecOps said in a statement.

Caslon Chua, the company's chief software architect who headed a group that created the 80-megabyte program, said they had successfully tested David with several Windows applications.

Since the first Linux was created in 1991 by Linus Torvalds of Finland, its code had been made available for free, provided improvements also were shared freely.

Microsoft and other proprietary software vendors keep their source code protected by patents. *AP*

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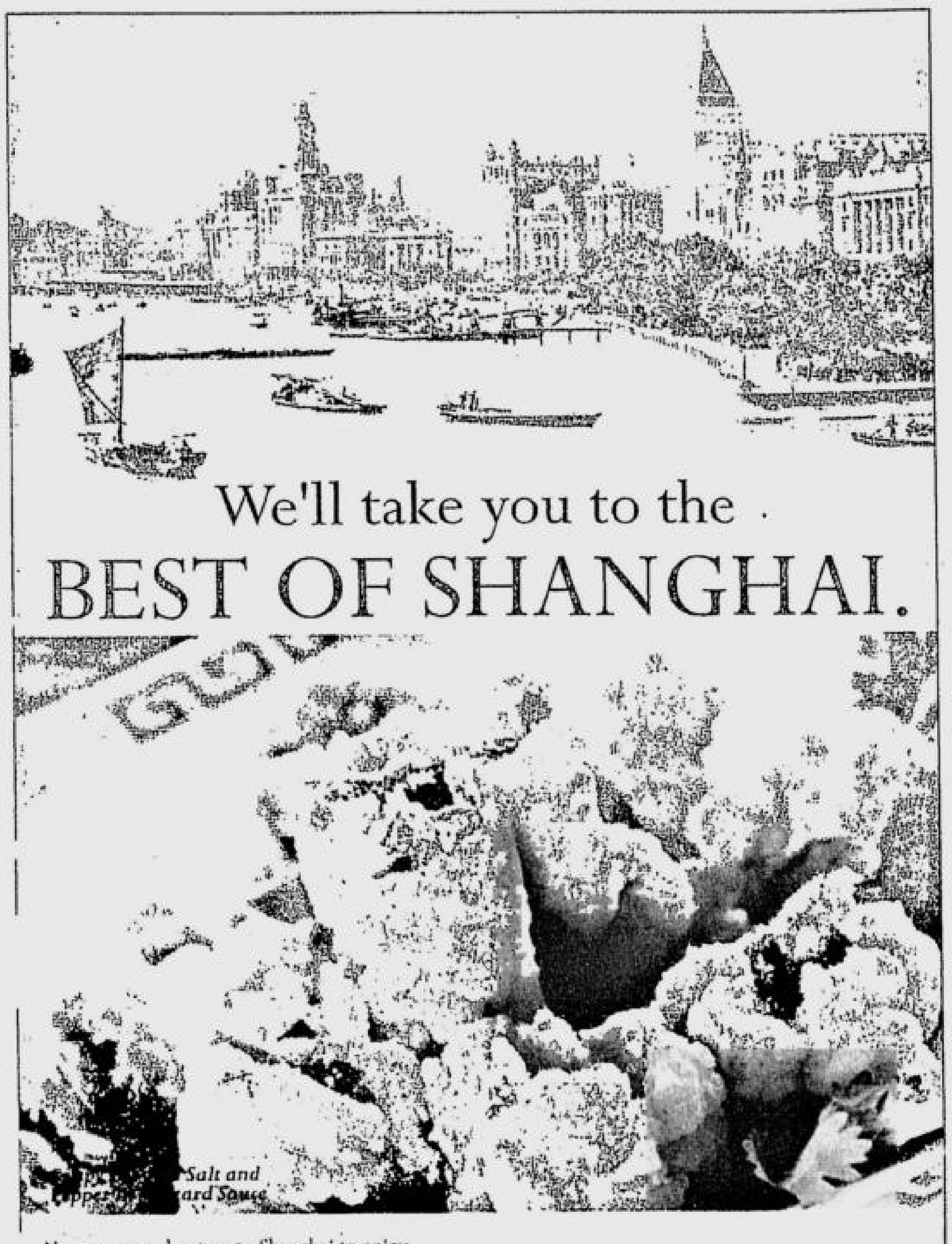

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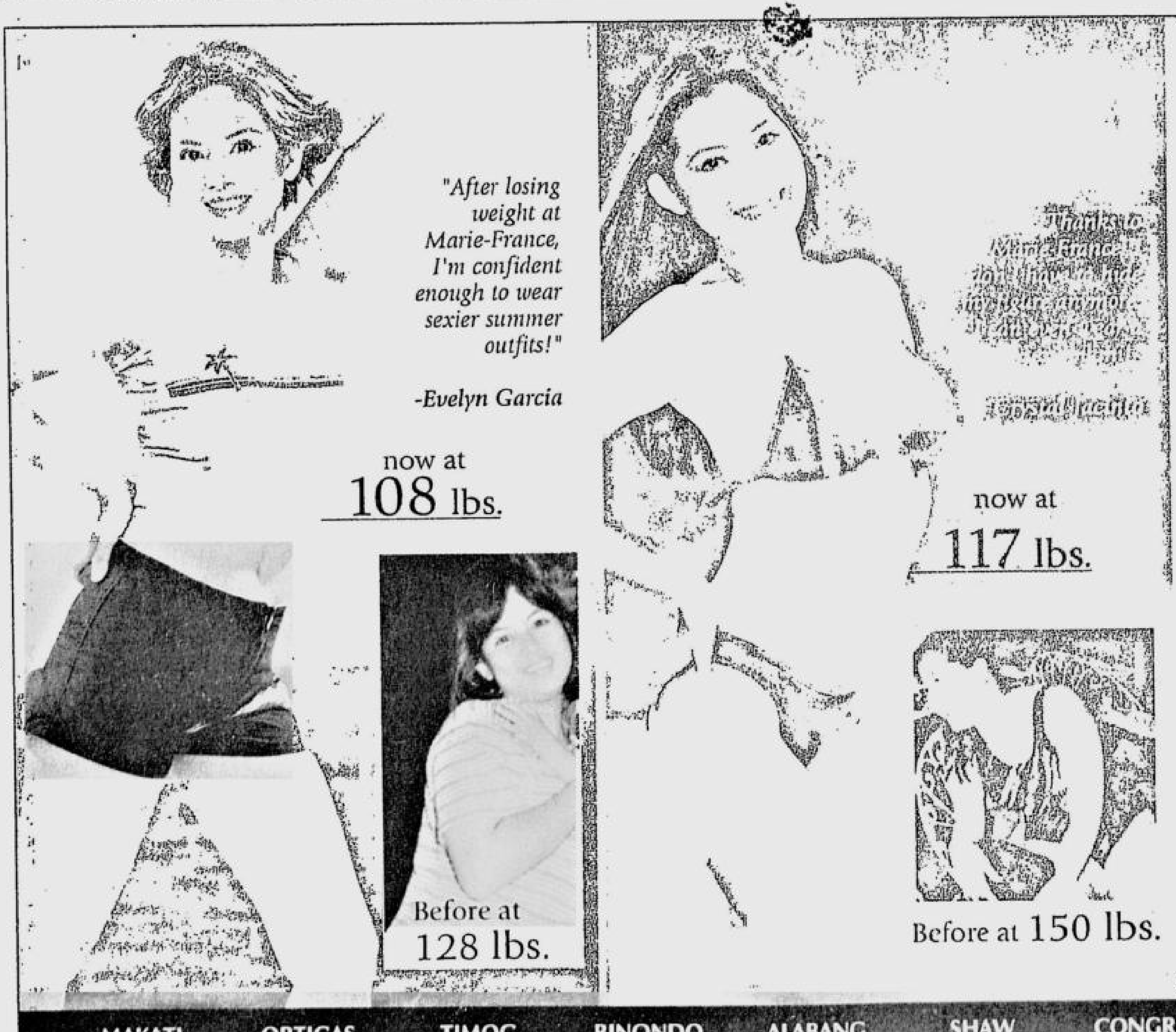
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The letter was received Wednesday and Thai police said they were stepping up security around the South Korean Embassy in Bangkok. It has about 50 employees.

The South Korean Foreign Ministry in Seoul said it had not notified other nations on the list but that it had confirmed that the Pakistan Embassy in Bangkok had also received a similar letter, an official said on condition of anonymity. South Korean diplomatic missions worldwide were alerted to the threat.

The country's National Police Agency could not immediately comment on whether it had stepped up precautions in South Korea.

South Korea plans to send some 3,000 more troops to Iraq, which would make it the biggest coalition partner behind the United States and Britain.

The deployment, pledged earlier this year for the northern Iraq oil town of Kirkuk, was put on hold amid concerns it would involve combat operations in violation of a parliamentary mandate for peacekeeping.

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By Alcuin Papa

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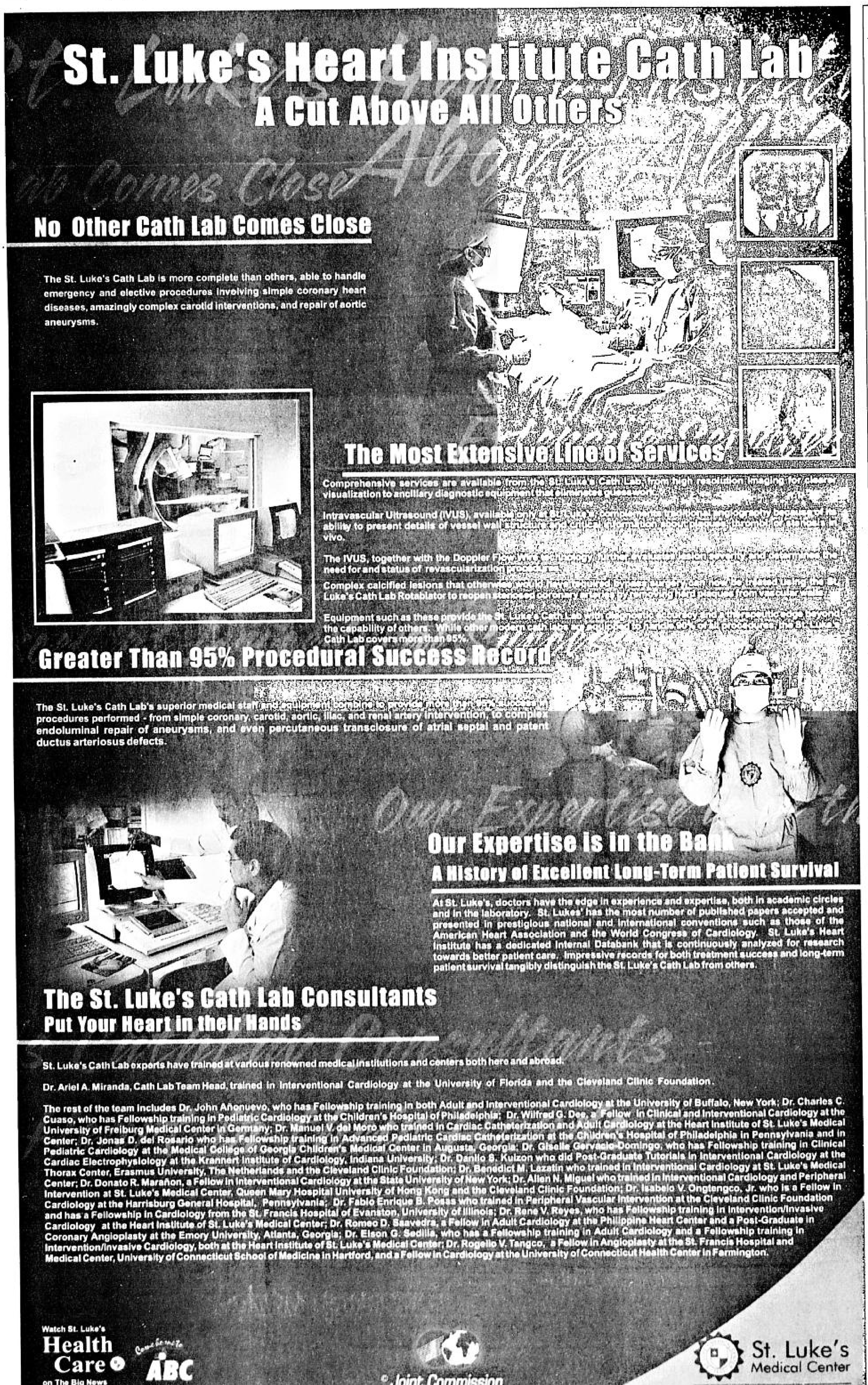

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Gospel:	Jn 6:1-15

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Commentary

Sitting on the ground is a symbol of poverty and powerlessness; it means we have no illusions of grandeur. We don't often sit on the ground nowadays, and almost never at Mass. But when we are at Mass we are spiritually those disciples in today's reading, sitting on the ground in humility and simplicity, sharing our poverty and (because of it) sharing the Lord's gift. Miracles seem to happen in situations of scarcity rather than plenty. Where there is plenty there is no need of miracles! Where there is plenty you don't have to struggle, you don't have to come up against realities too painfully, you just ease your way through with a check book. But in the story those people had almost nothing. There were only five loaves to feed thousands. John says they were barley loaves. This was the cheapest kind of bread; in fact barley was really considered animal-feed. It is only the very poor who would eat barley loaves.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION—Statutes operate prospectively—The principle is well entrenched that statutes, including administrative rules and regulations, operate prospectively only, unless the legislative intent to the contrary is manifest by express terms or by necessary implication. In the present case, there is no indication that the revenue regulation may operate retroactively. Furthermore, there is an express provision stating that it "shall take effect on January 1, 1987," and that it "shall be applicable to all leases written on or after the said date." Being clear on its prospective application, it must be given its literal meaning and applied without further interpretation. Thus, BLC is not in a position to invoke the provisions of Revenue Regulation 19-86 for lease rentals it received prior to January 1, 1987. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Azcuna, First Division, BPI Leasing Corporation vs Court of Appeals, G. R. No.127624, November 18, 2003]

BY R. B. VERA

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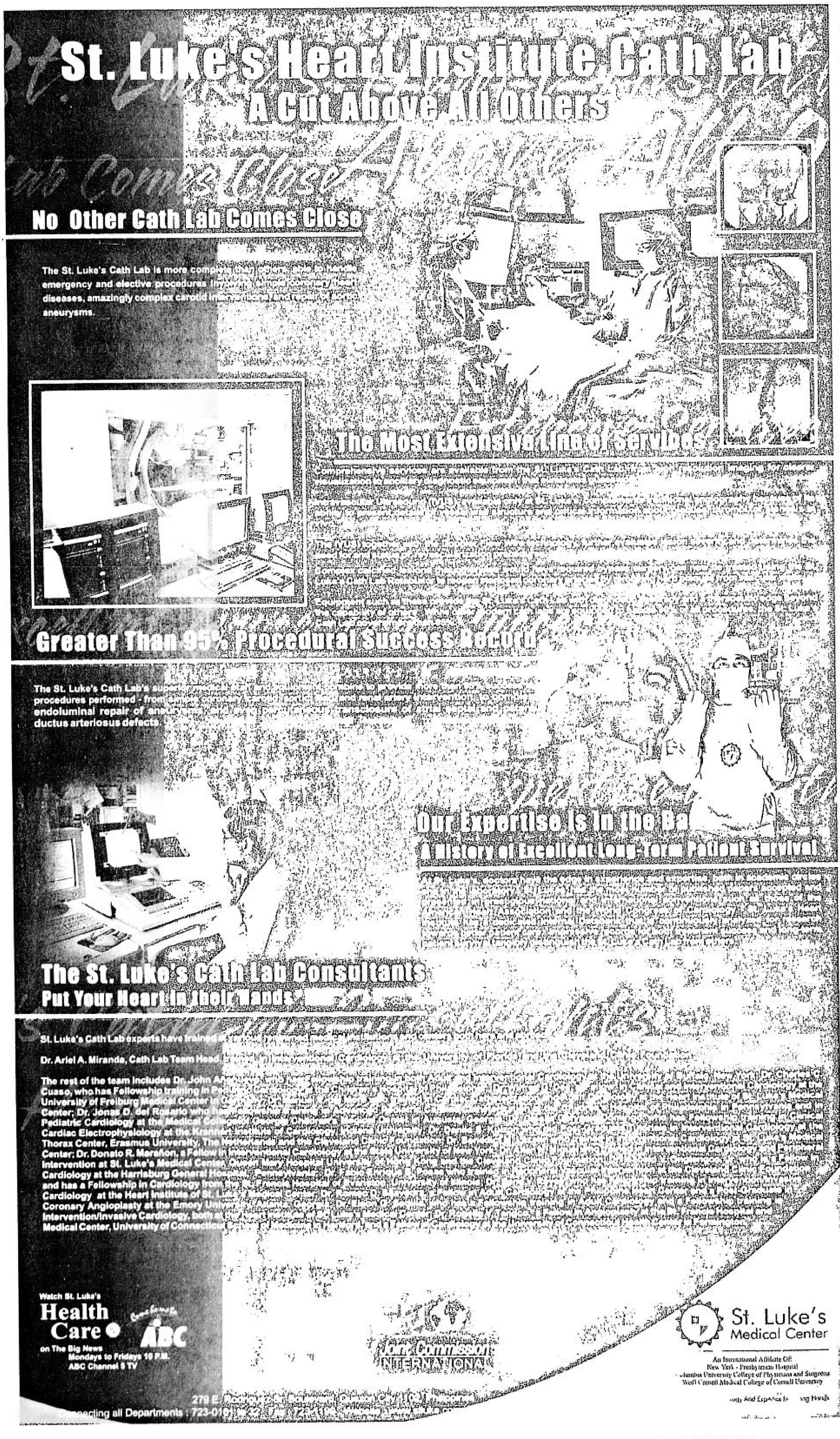
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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION—Statutes operate prospectively—The principle is well entrenched that statutes, including administrative rules and regulations, operate prospectively only, unless the legislative intent to the contrary is manifest by express terms or by necessary implication. In the present case, there is no indication that the revenue regulation may operate retroactively. Furthermore, there is an express provision stating that it "shall take effect on January 1, 1987." and that it "shall be applicable to all leases written on or after the said date." Being clear on its prospective application, it must be given its literal meaning and applied without further interpretation. Thus, BLC is not in a position to invoke the provisions of Revenue Regulation 19-86 for lease rentals it received prior to January 1, 1987. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Azcuna, First Division, BPI Leasing Corporation vs Court of Appeals, G. R. No.127624, November 18, 2003]

BY R. B. VERA

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Can't find precinct? Just text

By Martin P. Marfil

TO HELP prevent confusion on election day, the Commission on Elections has unveiled its "Find Precinct" project.

Using a cell phone, a voter could send a P2.50 text message, and receive, also by text, the number and location of his/her precinct.

Although the list of voters has yet to be completed, voters who are Globe subscribers can now use the service. Just type: findp, space, last name, comma, space, first name, comma, space, middle initial, comma, space, month, hyphen, day, hyphen, year of birth—and send to 2958.

Project head Philip Juico said they are still ironing out details so the service would be available to subscribers of other providers.

He added that they only have 18 million names in their list. Comelec said there are about 42.8 million voters for the coming election.

Elections Commissioner Mehol Sadain said that the certified voters list or CVL is 98 percent complete and it will soon be available in their central files.

The Comelec has been under fire for not coming out early with the voters' list and because of reports that it has been unable to procure indelible ink for the May 10 elections.

Meanwhile, the National Movement for Free Elections said the voters' list they acquired for Metro Manila has numerous errors.

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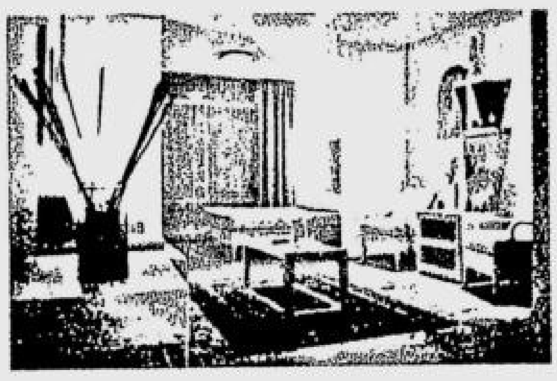

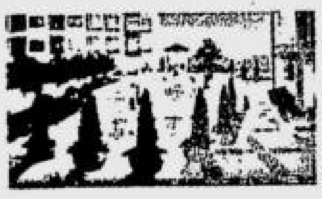

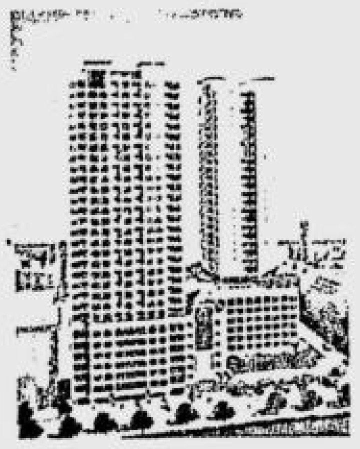

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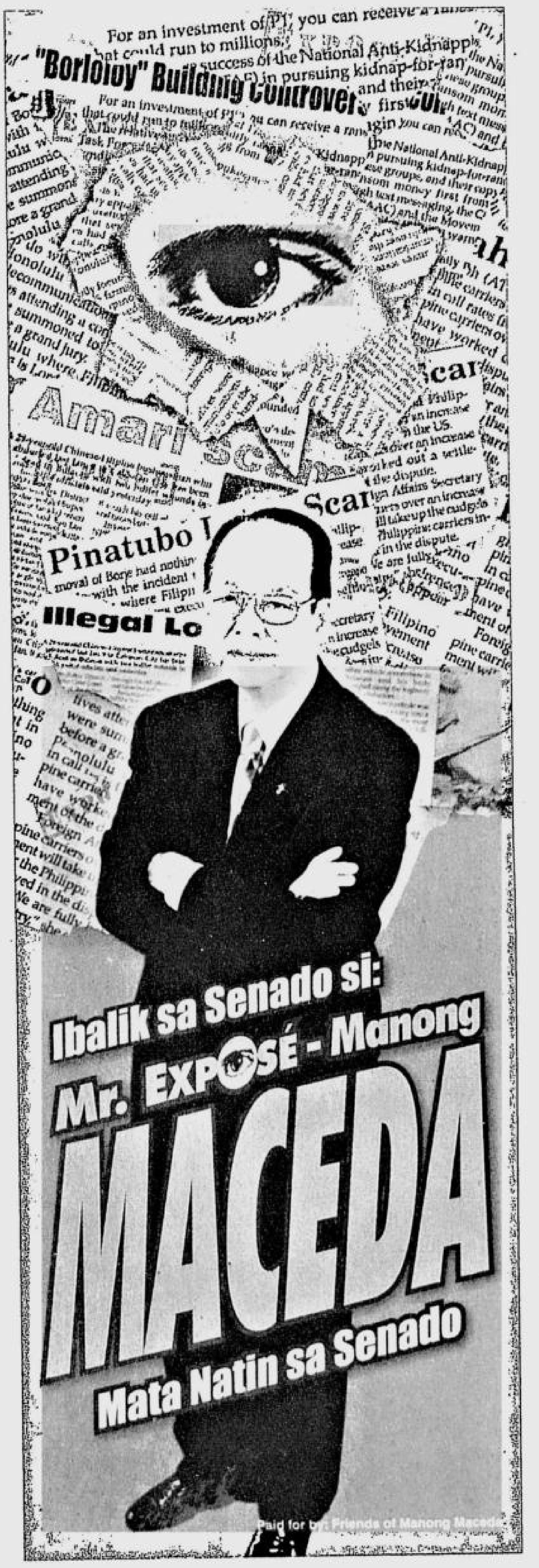

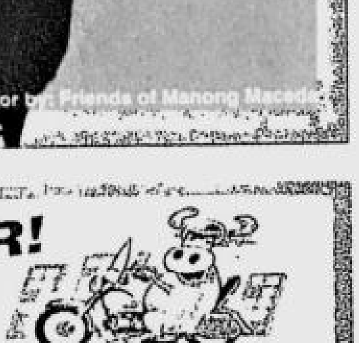

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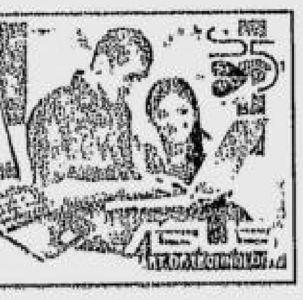
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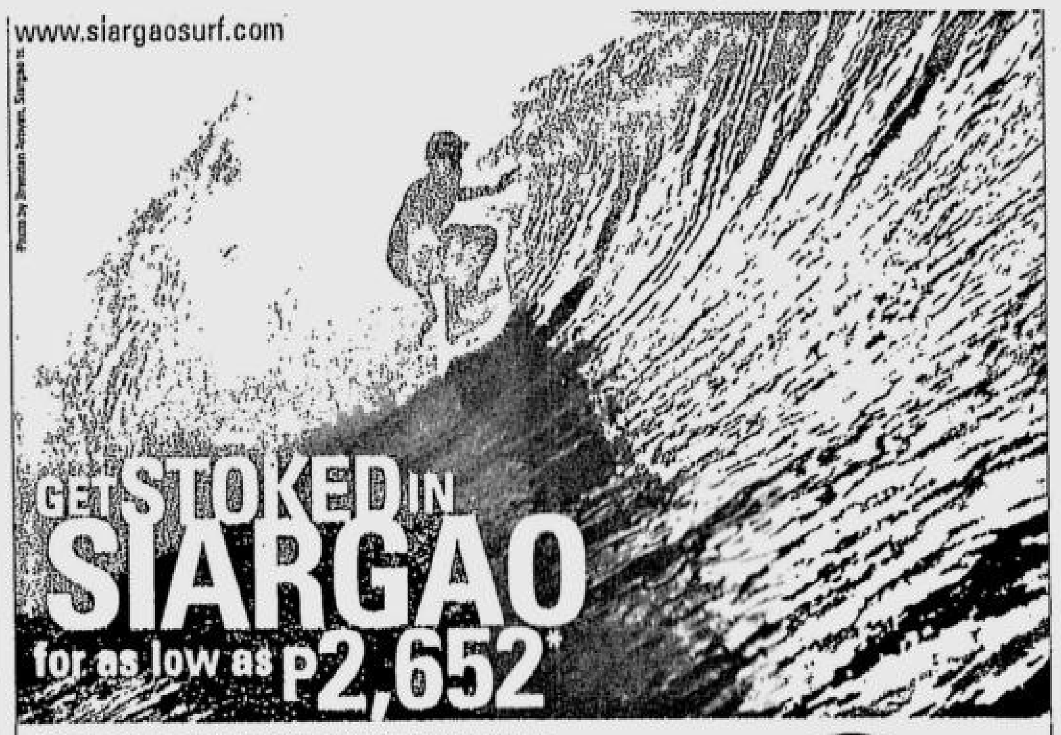
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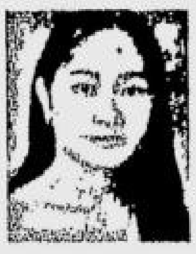

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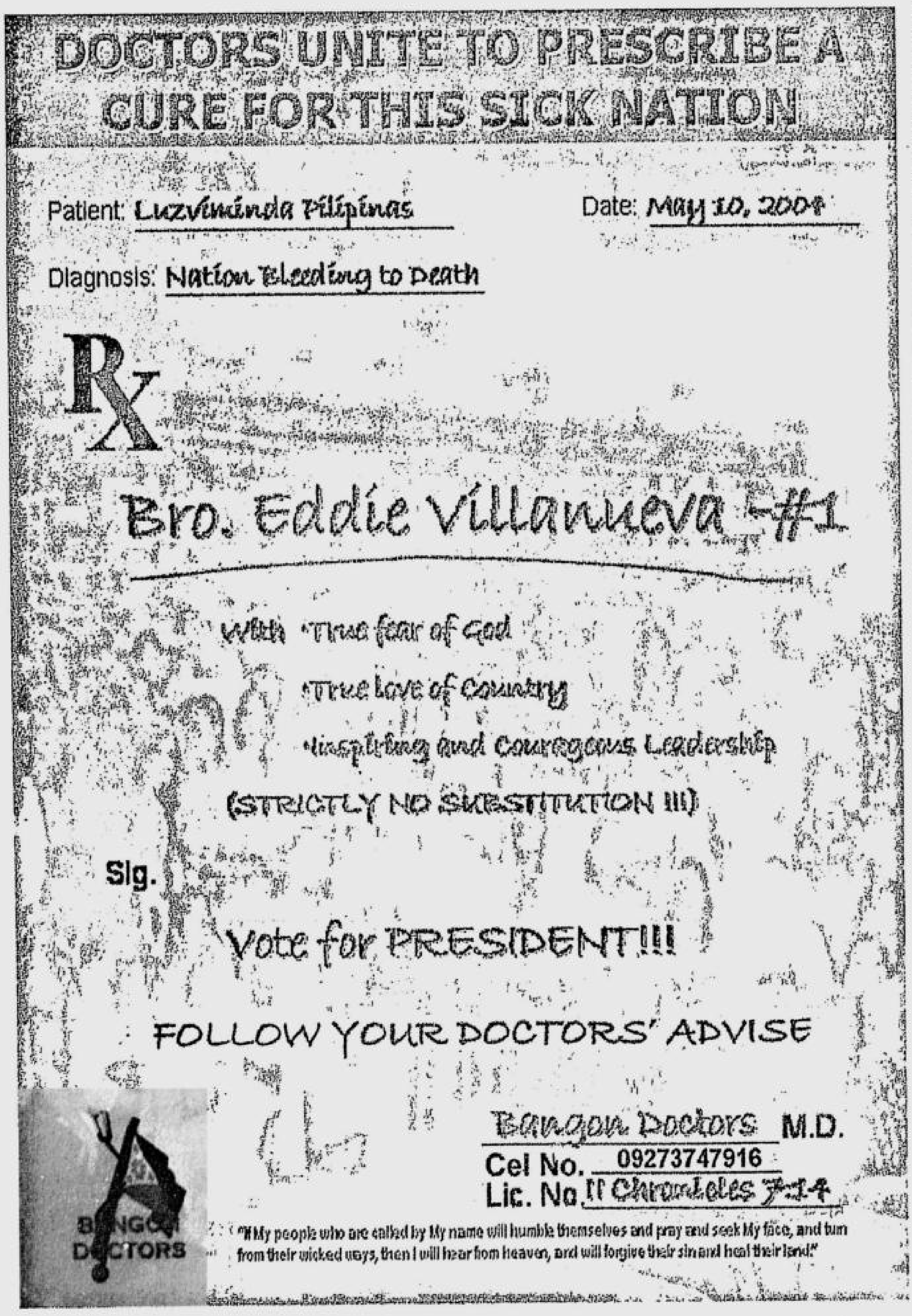

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Pinoy twins are 2 years old

From page A1

CARL and Clarence celebrate their 2nd birthday at a children's hospital in New York with their mother Arlene, Dr. James Goodrich and social worker Meredith Gosin. AP

Hospital wore party hats. Carl and Clarence, still joined at the tops of their heads, wore a bandage over their skulls, covering the area where surgeons have been working for six months to convert a tangle of blood vessels into separate circulation systems for independent lives.

At a news conference before the party, doctors and therapists said the Filipino twins, who live at Blythedale with their mother between operations at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, have been showing that they're ready for separation: One will sleep while the other's awake; one will play while the other cries; and they fight over toys.

"The boys will race each other to get to a toy first," said Julie Knitter, Blythedale's director of occupational therapy. "If they do get there at the same time, they will play tug of war until someone lets go."

Barbara Milch, the director of physical therapy, said the twins have learned to work together to get into a semi-standing position in their crib.

Months before final surgery

"They're eager to experience the world upright," she said.

Caregivers also noted that with the help of continuing nutrition and physical therapy, the boys have made some recent advances: They take off their socks and shoes, they clap hands to "If You're Happy and You Know It."

"Both children are doing extremely well," said Dr. James Goodrich, who leads the surgical team. "No neurological complications or issues have developed."

But the doctors, maintaining the gradual approach that was chosen over a single marathon operation, said it will still be months before they can perform the long-awaited surgery that separates the boys. The twins have been through three major operations since October, with surgeons opening windows in the skull area to carefully push the boys' brains apart and divide the blood vessels between them.

In mid-May, the twins will make their first trip to Manhattan so doctors can measure their blood flow by computer, using a magnetic resonance program at Beth Israel Medical Center.

After that, the boys will undergo a minor operation to have tissue expanders inserted beneath the scalp over each twin's left ear. The expanders are small sacs that can be gradually inflated with saline to stretch the skin of the scalp, giving doctors more to work with when the skulls are reconstructed after separation.

5th operation may be needed

After the boys heal from those incisions, a major operation, dividing one last major blood vessel, would follow, probably during the summer, Goodrich said. He said he hopes the separation can be completed during that surgery but added that a fifth operation might be required for that, depending on how the surgery goes, especially if there's swelling of the brains.

Because surgeons have cut through different areas of the boys' skulls in each operation, just 3 inches of bone remains to be cut through for full separation, Goodrich said.

Either way, extensive reconstruction of the skulls will be necessary after separation. Dr. David Staffenberg, the lead plastic surgeon, plans to use muscle covering from the boys' midsection to help replace the membrane that covers the brains. The muscle covering, fascia, would then be covered by some of the skin produced by the tissue expanders. Staffenberg said bone replacement would be deferred temporarily as the boys recover.

Mother's strength

Dr. Milicent Mitchell, chief of pediatric pulmonology at Blythedale, credited the boys' mother for their strength and determination.

Arlene Aguirre bathes the boys, gives them their medications and is "an integral part of this team," Mitchell said.

"Her wish is to return to the Philippines with her two boys at her side," she said.

Identical twins

In most cases of conjoined twins, it's taken for granted that they're identical, the products of a single fertilized egg that begins to divide into twins but does so only partially.

But in the case of Carl and Clarence, there was some doubt.

The boys' mother, Arlene, believed they were fraternal twins. Doctors, too, saw the boys' different body shapes and personalities and wondered if they could have been from separate fertilized eggs that combined soon after conception.

"They're very different even though they're attached to each other," said Dr. Robert Marion, a geneticist and the boys' pediatrician, at Wednesday's news conference at Blythedale Children's Hospital. "Carl's serious, Clarence is outgoing and bubbly. They're different in size, they look different."

If it could be established that the boys were not identical twins, it would be the first known case of fraternal conjoined twins, the doctors said. So DNA samples were taken from the boys' skin in February, during the latest operation in their separation process.

The tests showed the boys are identical, which seemed to surprise Marion.

"They're so different in so many ways," Marion said. "It kind of gives you pause to think that genetics plays so little of a role."

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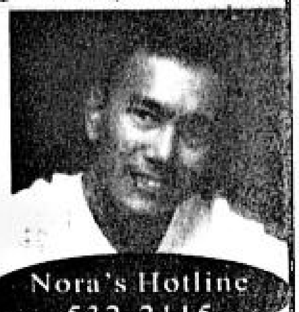

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Mayor Vi denies FPJ camp permit to rally

By Mei Magsino
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LIPA CITY—Don't step on the daisies.

This was the reason Mayor Vilma Santos reportedly gave for denying a permit to rally at the city plaza here to presidential candidate and fellow actor Fernando Poe Jr. and his slate.

According to Santos' local rival, mayoral candidate Ruben Umali, "Our people went to Vilma's office three times and were rejected three times. And the reason our permit was rejected was really terrible. The Vilma administration said we might destroy all the ornamental plants in the plaza."

Santos belongs to the administration Lakas-CMD while Poe is the standard-bearer of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP). They had appeared in movies together in the past.

Umali, the local KNP bet, added: "We think it was very unfair because the same venue was used by the Lakas candidates on March 27 for their proclamation rally."

Last night's KNP rally was held instead on land owned by former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste, the husband of Poe's running mate Sen. Loren Legarda, in Levitown, Barangay Marauoy, some four kilometers from the Lipa City Hall.

According to an INQUIRER source at city hall, even movie producer Mother Lily Monteverde had tried to convince Santos to approve the KNP's request for a rally permit but the mayor remained firm in her decision.

Santos, however, told GMA-7 News last night she had approved the permit for April 21 but the KNP rescheduled its rally for the 22nd, which had been reserved for a band concert and Earth Day celebration.

The city plaza was the same venue where Leviste's twin brother, Conrad, went up the stage and raised the arm of Lakas vice presidential candidate Noli de Castro, Legarda's rival.

The plaza was reportedly part of the P60-million beautification project started in October last year by Santos.

The INQUIRER called the city mayor for her reaction but she wasn't at her office nor did she answer her mobile phone.

For his part, Poe said he knew Santos and she was not the type to do this.

"Hindi ganoon si Vilma. Sa tingin ko, kasama na yun sa pulitika. Siguro inipit nila si Vilma," Poe said. *"Pero ganoon pa man, okay lang sa amin yun."* (Vilma is not like that. I believe it's just politics. She was probably caught in the middle. Anyway, it's okay with us.)

With Christine Avendaño

Lito Lapid is off the hook

By Armand N. Nocum

OMBUDSMAN investigators yesterday withdrew the graft charges they filed against K4 senatorial candidate and former Pampanga Gov. Manuel "Lito" Lapid relative to the alleged illegal collection of quarry fees in Pampanga.

In a two-page motion, Prosecutor Jesus Micael said a thorough investigation of the case showed that the accusations against Lapid were largely based on hearsay and that it should, therefore, be withdrawn.

"After conducting reinvestigation and/or reconsideration of the . . . case, the undersigned (Micael) recommended that the complaint filed against all accused be dismissed," he said.

Charged with Lapid were former Vice Gov. Clayton Olalia, Provincial Treasurer Jovito Sabado, Mabalacat Municipal Mayor Marino Morales, Special Police Officer Nestor Tadeo and several private individuals.

Lapid and other accused were charged with conspiring in 1996 to 1998 to allegedly collect illegal, padded and unauthorized quarry fees and for failing to remit them to quarry operators or the provincial government.

The accusation were contained in an unsigned letter sent to the National Bureau of Investigation in 1998.

However, in his investigation, Micael found that the complaint did not cite specific cases or specific acts that would warrant the filing of the case.

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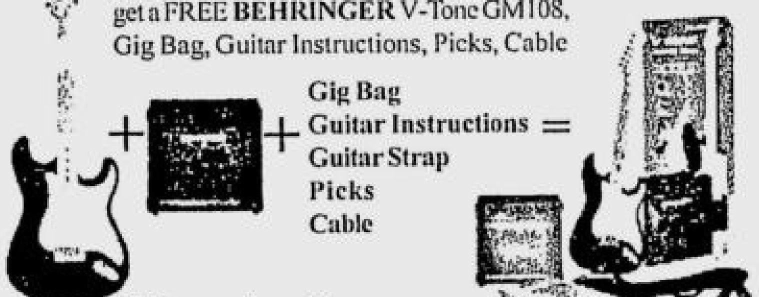

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- Karatedo
- Milo Best Center Exhibition
- Powerlifting Demo
- Artistic Silat
- Exhibition of Philippine International Competitive Aerobics Federation

Milestone for RP eagle: 'Kabayan' soars into the wild

HE strutted atop the wooden pole from end to end inside the 10-foot steel cage, ignoring the wide-open door.

It took an animal keeper about five minutes to coax him out. But he landed on another pole right outside the enclosure, where he stayed, very still, for quite some time.

And then he spread his wings, all of two meters wide, to commence an initially bumpy flight. Finally, he soared over the lush slopes of the country's highest mountain. It was, aptly, high noon.

Thus did the year-and-a-half-old Kabayan become the first Philippine Eagle bred in captivity to be released in the wild. Prior to this flight, he had stayed for two weeks inside the Philippine National Oil Company's reservation area.

Kabayan's release, also witnessed by Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun and presidential daughter Luli Arroyo, was hailed by environmentalists as a "historic" event, perfectly timed with the celebration of Earth Day.

"This is a milestone," said Carlos Pedrosa, president of the non-profit Philippine Eagle Foundation.

50-50 chance

Bred and hatched by scientists and volunteers in the PEF grounds near Davao City, Kabayan—Tagalog for "compatriot"—has a 50-50 chance of survival in the wilderness, said PEF deputy director Dennis Salvador. Implanted in the bird's chest is a tiny transmitter that would help the foundation monitor his movements.

The PEF said the "experimental" release is a preliminary step towards a full-blown program of reintroducing captive-bred eagles to the forests to complement wild eagle populations.

Kabayan's "namesake," Sen. Noli de Castro, is also his benefactor under the PEF's Adopt-an-Eagle Program. The program gives private individuals and companies the chance to become godparents of an eagle for P100,000 a year for six years.

Philippine Eagles, declared national bird in 1995 by then President Fidel Ramos, are native to rain forests and grow to be about a meter, or three feet, tall. Only about 500 of the endangered species, also known as monkey-eating eagles, or *Pithecophaga jefferyi*, remain in the country's forests, where deforestation and poaching threaten their survival. The species, which has one of the lower birth rates, was declared endangered in 1965.

The Davao center hatched two eaglets by artificial insemination in 1992, but both have remained caged for research and as a tourist attraction. PEF has been breeding eagles since 1992 and has so far successfully hatched 15 eaglets.

After Kabayan's release, the center now has 29 eagles, including those previously caught in the wild, after Kabayan's release. *Joselle d.R. Badilla and Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau, with a report from AP*

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Fire prevention chief under fire

By Armand N. Nocum

OMBUDSMAN Simeon Marcelo has ordered the filing of graft charges against the chief of the Bureau of Fire Protection and his finance officer for the alleged "ghost delivery" of about P11-million worth of office equipment and services to the BFP.

BFP head Francisco S. Senot and finance service unit chief Florante M. Cruz were also found liable for estafa for the alleged falsification of public documents relating to "ghost transactions with several suppliers concerning the procurement of BFP supplies and equipment, repair of BFP service vehicles and office equipment."

In a statement, Assistant Ombudsman Ernesto Nocos said the two officials were also accused of ordering BFP chief inspector Nelson G. Feliciano to obtain cash advances from "friendly suppliers."

The two also reportedly ordered Roberto L. Tan, then chief of the BFP supply division, to prepare "tailored" procurement documents to match the available supplies of friendly suppliers and to cover up the cash advances received by Feliciano.

Feliciano and Tan were subsequently removed from their posts, prompting them to reveal what they knew to the authorities. They also filed a graft complaint against their former superiors with the Ombudsman.

The alleged ghost transactions included the procurement of janitorial and office supplies and the never implemented renovation of the offices of top BFP officials. The acquisitions were reportedly done without public bidding.

Alpha Phi Beta fellowship

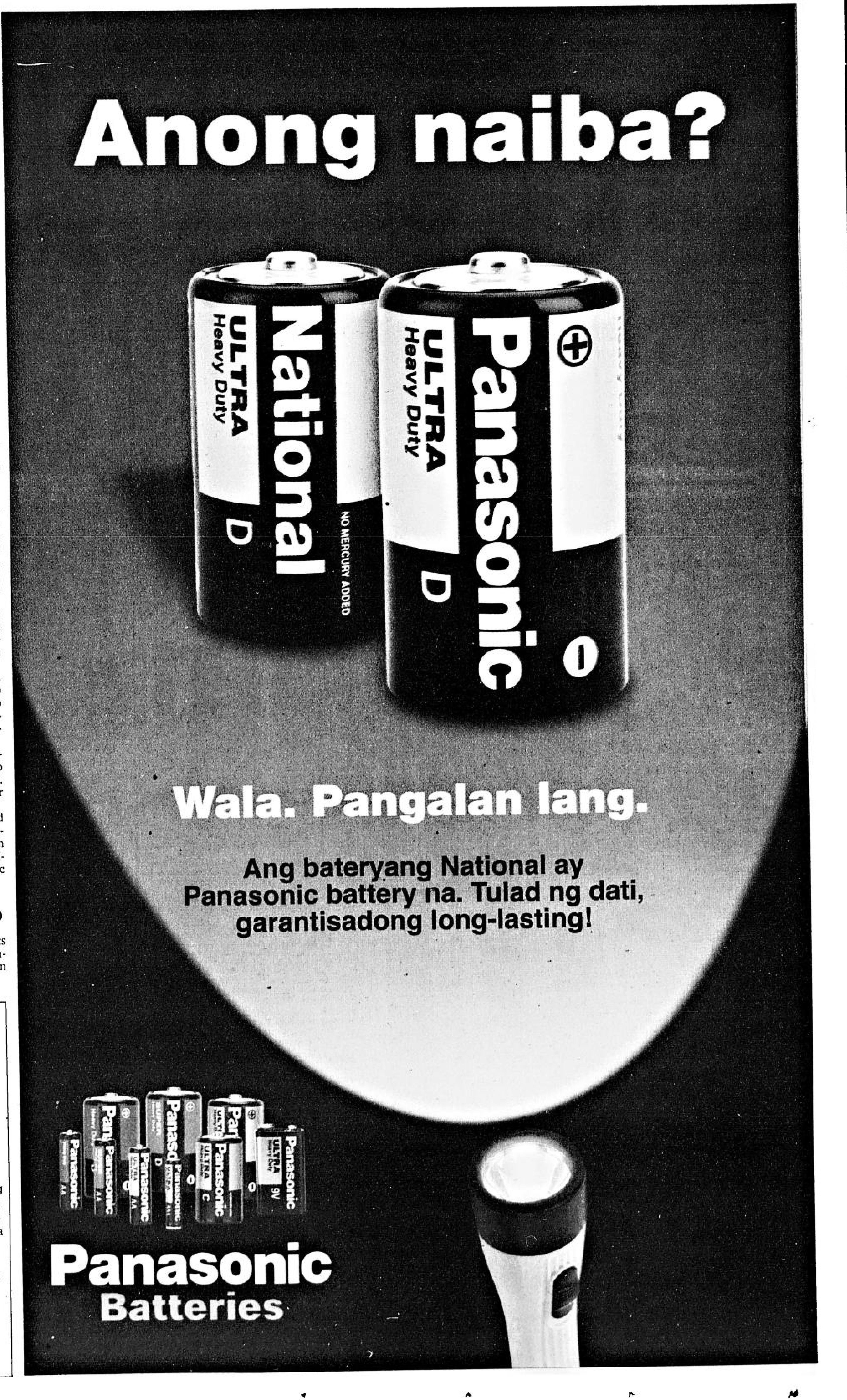
THE ALPHA Phi Beta Chancery will hold its monthly fellowship today at 6 p.m. at The Gabaldon Room, Club Filipino, Greenhills, San Juan.

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

Kinikita ng PAGCOR, itinaya sa halalan?

Isinusugal ba sa kandidatura ni Pangulong Arroyo ang kita ng PAGCOR? Totoo bang kinokotongan ng sindikato ang tong na nakukulekta ng pambansang pasugalan? May motibong pulitika? Pero bakit kasama sa nagbibintang ang simbahan? Tunghayan sa one-on-one interview ni Chino Trinidad kay Archbishop Oscar Cruz. Kasama sina Atty. Carol Araullo ng Plunderwatch, Romulo Abaya ng Act Now, Ferdinand Gaite ng Courage, at Dodie King ng PAGCOR.

ABC



The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Al-Qaida-linked group claims deadly Riyadh car bomb attack

DUBAI—Saudi militant followers of al-Qaida claimed responsibility for Wednesday's suicide bombing that targeted a security forces' headquarters in the capital Riyadh and vowed more bombings against government symbols.

A statement by a group calling itself Al Haramain Brigades, published by at least two Islamist Web sites, said the attack targeted special security and anti-terrorism units in the kingdom, a key US ally and the world's largest oil exporter.

"Al Haramain Brigades in the Arab peninsula succeeded in bombing the command headquarters of emergency and anti-terrorism forces of the interior ministry of the apostate al-Saloul (Saudi) government," said the statement in Arabic.

The group said it followed the path of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida group against the Saudi authorities.

"Since the heroic and noble mujahideen of al-Qaida who follow imam Sheikh bin Laden, God make him victorious... are preoccupied with the war against the crusaders—we, by God, are dedicating ourselves to fighting you and we will show you the punishment of heresy, apostasy and crime."

In Wednesday's attack, a suicide car bomber destroyed a security forces building, killing four people and wounding 148.

A Saudi official said there was "no doubt" the attack was by Saudi-born Bin Laden's al-Qaida.

The bombing occurred days after a US warning of a possible attack in the kingdom which is battling a tide of Islamist extremism linked to al-Qaida.

Al Haramain, the name of Islam's two holiest sites in the Saudi cities of Mecca and Medina, has previously claimed responsibility for a bomb attack in December on a Saudi security officer's car and has vowed to kill any others battling militants in the conservative Gulf Arab state.

The group promised more bombings.

"This bombing completely destroyed the targeted building and killed and injured tens of soldiers and commanders of the criminal, apostate mechanism which is fighting God, his prophet and the faithful," said the statement carried by Qal'a.net and Muntada al-Ansar Islamist Web sites.

"This operation which broke your backs, you tyrants, is but one shade of the many shades of pain which we will make you taste, God willing, and revenge by bombings and assassinations and other means shall not stop," said the statement signed by the "martyrdom" unit of the brigades.

Addressing Saudi security forces, the group vowed to avenge the killing of several top wanted militants in the kingdom. "We will only heal our wounds through blessed jihad (holy war)." *Reuters*

Saudi envoy denies oil-price deal to help Bush campaign

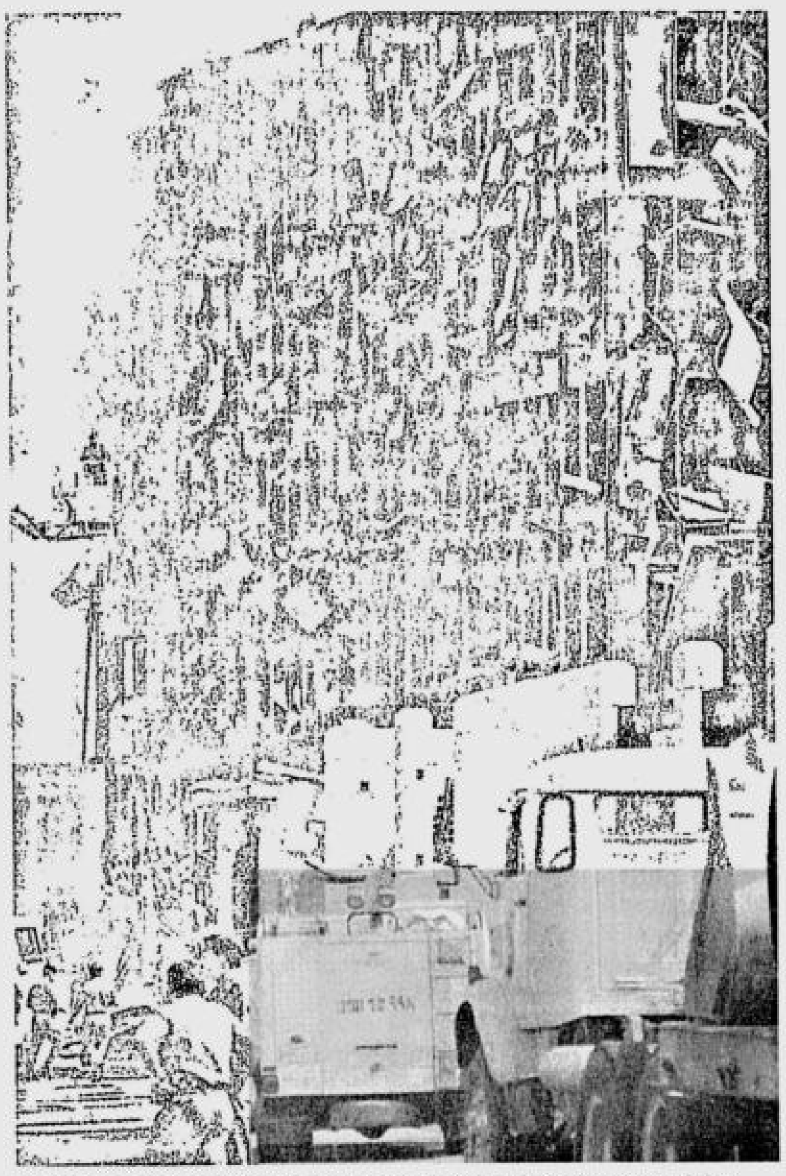
WASHINGTON—Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, denied on Wednesday that Riyadh had agreed to help lower oil prices to help US President George W. Bush's reelection bid.

There was no "political quid pro quo," he said, stressing that a lower price of oil "is good for the American people, the American economy, for the world economy."

Bandar said he hoped Bush's challenger, Democratic Sen. John Kerry, "has heard my explanation about the oil and he can be assured that we didn't make any deals that could interfere in our friend's internal affairs."

The White House has also denied the allegation, which surfaced in a new book by journalist Bob Woodward that focuses on the US administration's planning for the March 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Woodward suggested in "Plan of Attack" that Bandar had effectively promised Bush a boost in oil output to drop prices and strengthen the US economy ahead of the Nov. 2 election. *AFP*



SAUDI rescue vehicles and personnel are deployed in front of the destroyed headquarters building of the general security services in Riyadh, following a car bomb explosion April 21. AFP

Islamic conference slams US backing of Sharon plan

PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia—US President George W. Bush's backing of Israel's latest strategy on the Palestinian territories could "wreck the entire peace process in the Middle East," the chair of the world's biggest grouping of Muslim states warned Thursday.

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who heads the the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), was speaking at the opening of an emergency meeting here on US policies in Israel and Iraq.

He said Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to pull out of the Gaza strip while maintaining some Jewish settlements in the West bank "ignores and endangers fundamental issues that are central to the conflict...

"Indeed, if forced upon the Palestinians, the Israeli plan can literally wreck the entire peace process in the Middle East.

"It is most unfortunate that the United States administration has deemed it proper to support Israel's unilateral disengagement plan."

Malaysia called the OIC meeting at the request of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat after Bush last week backed Sharon's controversial plan, apparently reversing decades-old US policy.

Abdullah urged Washington to play the role of "honest broker," saying Sharon's plan contradicted the provisions of the US-endorsed roadmap for peace.

He called on delegates to come up with new ways of approaching the problem, suggesting that if governments were incapable of delivering justice for the Palestinians it was perhaps time for a "people-based global movement to carry the flag for Palestine."

Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization political chief Faruq Qaddumi told reporters on the sidelines of the conference that "the credibility of the US is nonsense. They have deviated from the right routes.

"They have proposed the peace initiative but lately after the visit of Sharon, they have cancelled all these initiatives to revive the peace process."

The Palestinian ambassador to Malaysia Ahmed al-Farra said a comminique to be issued after the meeting contained "a tactical plan". but gave no details apart from saying it would call for economic and diplomatic sanctions against Israel.

Abdullah said the situation in Iraq was also "turning for the worse" and urged the US to table a resolution in the UN Security Council to give the world body a "central role" through a new and expanded mandate. *AFP*

Michael Jackson indicted on child sex abuse charges

LOS ANGELES—Pop star Michael Jackson was indicted by a Santa Barbara County grand jury investigating child molestation allegations, according to news reports.

The Santa Barbara News-Press cited county sources but had no details about the indictments, nor was there any official confirmation or announcement. Similar reports Wednesday by ABC, CNN, MSNBC and Web sites for The New York Times and USA Today cited sources that were not identified.

Grand jury indictments are usually secret until a defendant is arraigned. The grand jury proceedings in the Jackson case replaced a preliminary hearing, which determines whether there is enough evidence for the case to go to trial.

Jackson's spokesperson, Raymone Bain, issued a statement on behalf of Jackson's attorneys saying the singer will plead not guilty during his scheduled April 30 arraignment if the grand jury issues an indictment. The statement did not confirm that an indictment has been handed down.

The singer and his attorneys "are confident that after a trial... Jackson will be fully exonerated," the statement read. "Michael is looking forward to his day in court."

Bain added in an interview that "nothing has been issued from the court which indicates that there is an indictment."

"In the next few days, as the dust settles, things will get clearer," she said Wednesday night. She said she had spoken with Jackson on Wednesday and that "he is out and about."

Jackson attorney Mark Geragos, reached by telephone, would not answer questions from The Associated Press. Geragos, other defense attorneys and prosecutors in the case are covered by a gag order. The district attorney's office also would not comment about the media reports.

"This probably is a court matter, to be able to give the information out, not the district attorney's office," said Susan Tellem of Tellem Worldwide, hired to handle media inquiries for District Attorney Tom Sneddon.

Tellem said court administrator Gary Blair would determine when the court would officially release any information about the grand jury. Messages left at Blair's office were not immediately returned.

The grand jury has spent the last three weeks hearing from witnesses, including a 14-year-old boy who claims the pop superstar sexually abused him. *AP*

ELECTRIC SERVICE IN THESE AREAS WILL BE MOMENTARILY INTERRUPTED FOR FACILITIES UPGRADING AND OTHER LINE WORK

MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

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MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

To carry out necessary maintenance and upgrading works on various **MERALCO** distribution facilities, electric service will be temporarily interrupted on the following dates and places:

MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2004

BULACAN (MEYCAUAYAN)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM – PORTION OF CIRCUIT MEYCAUAYAN 43YM

Bgy. Longos including S. Bañez and Antonio Ponciano Sts.

REASON : Various maintenance work along S. Bañez and Antonio Ponciano Sts. in Bgy. Longos, Meycauayan, Bulacan.

MONDAY TO TUESDAY, APRIL 26-27, 2004

PASAY CITY

BETWEEN 11:30PM AND 12:00MN (MON., 04/26/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 7:00AM AND 7:30AM (TUE., 04/27/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALIBAY 51VJ

Portion of F. B. Harrison St. from near Roberts St. to near U.S. Embassy Seafront Compound in Bgys. Sta. Clara and San Rafael.

BETWEEN 11:30PM (MON., 04/26/04) AND 7:30AM (TUE., 04/27/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALIBAY 51VJ

Portion of F. B. Harrison St. from and including U.S. Embassy Seafront Compound to near Lancaster St. including Pasadeña, Primero de Mayo, Offarel, Kaligtasan, Escobal Sts., Park and Galvez Aves. (Polo Road) in Bgy. San Rafael.

REASON : Upgrading of primary lines along F. B. Harrison St. in Bgy. San Rafael, Pasay City.

TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2004

QUEZON CITY

BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 5:00AM – PORTION OF CIRCUIT BALINTAWAK 41E AND 45E

Portion of Quirino Highway from Tandang Sora Ave. to near Makro – Novaliches.

Portion of Tandang Sora Ave. from Marcel Drive to Quirino Highway in Bgy. Sangandaan.

REASON : Replacement of rotten poles along Tandang Sora Ave. in Bgy. Sangandaan, Quezon City.

CAVITE

BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 5:00PM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS TERNATE 41TN AND 32ZO PUERTO AZUL 32XX AND 33XX; AND PORTION OF CIRCUIT TERNATE 31ZO

The whole of Ternate including Marbella Resort, Puerto Azul Beach Resort and Country Club, Ocean View Villas, Caysubic Cottages and Paniman Resorts.

The whole of Maragondon except Bgys. Kaylangis and Mabilog.

Bgys. Muzon, San Roque, Molino and Malainen in Naic.

REASONS: 1. Various maintenance work along Dasmariñas-FCIE-TMC II-Ternate 115-kV lines.

2. Annual preventive maintenance and testing work inside Meralco-Ternate substation.

BULACAN (SAN JOSE DEL MONTE)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUITS STA. MARIA 422YU AND SAPANG PALAY 33YO

Along Road 1 from Ipo Road to and including Road 2, Road 10, Road 11 and SJDM Water District in Bgy. Minuyan.

REASON : Relocation of poles along Road 2 in Bgy. Minuyan, San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan.

LAGUNA (SAN PEDRO)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 3:00PM – PORTION OF CIRCUIT SAN PEDRO 40WH

Along Father Masi St. from Magsaysay Road to and including Adelina Complex Ph-1, Hilltop Holiday Hills Subd., Fiesta Homes Subd., Carmen Homes Subd. and Holiday Hills Subd. in Bgy. San Antonio.

REASON : Relocation of concrete pole at Cresta Ola St. in Holiday Homes Subd. and various maintenance work in Bgy. San Antonio, San Pedro, Laguna.

TUESDAY TO WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27-28, 2004

BULACAN (PAOMBONG)

BETWEEN 11:00PM (TUE., 04/27/04) AND 5:00AM (WED., 04/28/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT CALUMPIT 322YQ

Along Poblacion Road from Paombong Market to and including Bgys. Pugad, Masukol, Sta. Cruz, Binaklod, Lantad, Kut-Kut, San Roque, Malumot, San Jose and San Vicente.

REASON : Upgrading of primary facilities along Poblacion Road in Paombong, Bulacan.

LAS PIÑAS CITY AND PARAÑAQUE CITY

BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (TUE., 04/27/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 5:30AM AND 6:00AM (WED., 04/28/04) – PORTIONS OF CIRCUIT PAMPLONA 47XD

Portion of J. Aguilar Ave. (CAA Road) from Diamond St. to and including Saging, Bagong Lipunan, Guyabano, Manga, Lanzones, Receiver Sts.; Emapalico Homes, Camella Homes 5, Sanvesco I Subd., Francisco Motors Corp. and Rohm & Haas Phils. in Bgys. BF International and CAA 13 Compound, Las Piñas City.

Along Naga and DBP Roads from CAA Road to and including Airmen's Village, Villa Isabelita Subd., St. Joseph Park Subd., Camella Homes 3-D, DBP Farm Subd., Country Homes and Martinville Subd. in Bgy. Pulang Lupa Dos, Las Piñas City.

Along San Luis, Santo Niño and San Pedro Sts. from Saging St. to Sucat Road including Equity Homes 2 & 3, San Antonio Valley 6, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15, Mihara Homes, San Felipe and San Juan Sts. in Bgy. San Isidro, Parañaque City.

Portion of Dr. A. Santos Ave. (Sucat Road) from San Pedro St. to near Bernabe Subd. in Bgy. San Isidro, Parañaque City.

BETWEEN 11:00PM (TUE., 04/27/04) AND 6:00AM (WED., 04/28/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT PAMPLONA 47XD

Along Saging St. from near J. Aguilar Ave. (CAA Road) to near San Luis St. including CAA Compound in Bgy. CAA 13 Compound, Las Piñas City.

REASON : Reconstruction work along Saging St. in Bgy. CAA 13 Compound, Las Piñas City.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2004

RIZAL (CAINTA)

BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 5:00AM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT ST. ANTHONY 61ZN

Venus Steel and Midland Steel Corp.

REASON : Various maintenance work along Marcos Highway, A. Rodriguez Ave. and Ortigas Ave. Ext. in Pasig City and Cainta, Rizal.

BULACAN (SAN RAFAEL)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM – PORTION OF CIRCUIT CRUZ NA DAAN 35YR

Along CBA Road from Meralco-Cruz Na Daan substation to near Pumping Station in Bgy. Diliman.

REASON : Replacement of pole along CBA Road in Cruz Na Daan, San Rafael, Bulacan.

WEDNESDAY TO THURSDAY, APRIL 28-29, 2004

VALENZUELA CITY

BETWEEN 11:30PM AND 12:00MN (WED., 04/28/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 4:00AM AND 4:30AM (THU., 04/29/04) – PORTIONS OF CIRCUIT BALINTAWAK 404E

Portion of Tullahan Road from Reparo Road to near Tullahan River including Alyson's Chemical Ents., H. C. De Jesus Gen. Merchandise, Galanto Compound, De Castro Compound, Del Rey Ville No. 3 and Apple Ville in Bgy. Sta. Quiteria.

Portion of Gen. T. De Leon, Que Grande and Sulok Sts. from near Upper Tibagan to Hobart Village III including F. Bautista, Tatalon, La Mesa, Darlucio Sts., Sta. Monica Subd., Benilla Neighborhood, B-4 Farm, World Metal Corp., Hillside Ville, Allied Textile Mill, Larry Ong Compound, Ugong Market, Barrios Compound 1, 2 & 4, East Pacific Commercial, Asian Steel, Maderazo Farm, Fompac Plastic Corp. and Rolling Hills Resort.

Portion of F. Bautista St. from Que Grande St. to near San Agustin Village including Marble Villas in Bgy. Ugong

BETWEEN 11:30PM (WED., 04/28/04) AND 4:30AM (THU., 04/29/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT BALINTAWAK 404E

Portion of Tullahan Road and Gen. T. De Leon St. from Tullahan River to Upper Tibagan including Farola Homes in Bgys. Ugong and Sta. Quiteria.

REASON : Various maintenance work along Gen. T. De Leon St. in Bgy. Ugong, Valenzuela City.

LAGUNA (STA. CRUZ)

BETWEEN 11:30PM (WED., 04/28/04) AND 7:30AM (THU., 04/29/04) – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS STA. CRUZ 34WF AND 35WF

Portion of P. Guevarra St. from Meralco – Sta. Cruz substation to and including Meralco – Sta. Cruz Branch, Bgy. Sto. Angel, Sta. Cruz town proper, Bos. Santisima Cruz, San Pablo Norte and Bgy. Pagsawitan.

Portion of National Road from near Provincial Road in Bo. Bubukal to P. Guevarra St. including Laguna School of Arts and Trades, Sheilanger Country Homes, Laguna Hog, Aldramin Subd., Leonora Subd., Monserrat Subd. and JRJ Country Homes in Bos. Bagumbayan, Callos, Sto. Angel Del Sur and Patimbao.

REASON : Various maintenance work in various places in Bgy. Bagumbayan and Sta. Cruz town proper, Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

PASAY CITY; AND TAGUIG CITY

BETWEEN 11:30PM AND 12:00MN (WED., 04/28/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 4:00AM AND 4:30AM (THU., 04/29/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALIBAY 53VJ

Portion of South Superhighway from near Villamor Airbase to AFP-RSBS Industrial Park including TESDA, Air Navigation Service and AFP Home Defense Training Center in Bgy. Western Bicutan, Taguig City.

BETWEEN 11:30PM (WED., 04/28/04) AND 4:30AM (THU., 04/29/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALIBAY 53VJ

Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

REASON : Relocation of primary facilities affected by construction of Sales Bridge near Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

THURSDAY TO FRIDAY, APRIL 29-30, 2004

BULACAN

BETWEEN 11:00PM (THU., 04/29/04) AND 5:00AM (FRI., 04/30/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT BALIWAG 34YW

Bustos town proper, Bgys. Tanawan, Bunga Menor, Malamig, San Pedro Tulay, Colisculis, Malawak, Liciada, Cauayan, Katakte, Bunga Mayor, Tibagan, Tibagan Pumping Station, Church of Latter Day Saints, Michael Farm, Van Harsen Farms and Gold Spring Farms in Bustos.

REASON : Construction of primary lines along Hilario St. in Bustos, Bulacan.

LAS PIÑAS CITY

BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (THU., 04/29/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 5:30AM AND 6:00AM (FRI., 04/30/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT PAMPLONA 43XD - LAS PIÑAS 47XA

Portion of Alabang-Zapote Road from Aria St. to near Crispina Ave. including Ocampo Ave., Doña Manuela Subd. 4 and Las Piñas City Hall in Bgy. Pamplona Tres

BETWEEN 11:00PM (THU., 04/29/04) AND 6:00AM (FRI., 04/30/04) – PORTION OF CIRCUIT PAMPLONA 43XD - LAS PIÑAS 47XA

Portion of Alabang-Zapote Road from Crispina Ave. to and including Monark Subd., Republic Steel Tube, Greenview St., Pamplona Park Subd., Romarville Subd., Sterling Life Homes, Sta. Cristina Subd., Verdant Acres Subd., 2nd Reyville Subd., Camella Homes 3 & 3-C, Doña Manuela Subd. 4-A, 4-B, 4-D & 5, Elizabeth Seton School, Las Piñas Village and Alonzo Cpd. in Bgys. Pamplona Uno, Pamplona Dos and Pamplona Tres.

REASON : Various maintenance work along Alabang-Zapote Road in Bgys. Pamplona Uno, Pamplona Dos and Pamplona Tres, Las Piñas City.

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2004

RIZAL (CAINTA)

BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 5:00AM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT ST. ANTHONY 61ZN

Venus Steel and Midland Steel Corp.

REASON : Various maintenance work along Marcos Highway, A. Rodriguez Ave. and Ortigas Ave. Extn. in Pasig City and Cainta, Rizal.

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Basra mourns 73 killed in suicide car bombings

BASRA, Iraq—Sorrow and anger gripped Iraq's southern city of Basra on Thursday as the families of 73 people slain by suicide bombers mourned their dead.

Five of the 99 people wounded in the blasts died overnight, hospital officials said, raising the death toll to 73.

Streets were quiet and many parents kept their children at home after 17 youngsters were incinerated on their way to school in Wednesday's coordinated bombings of police stations.

The five blasts at three police stations in the Shiite city, and at the police academy in nearby Zubeir, a mainly Sunni town, were the bloodiest attacks in British-controlled Basra since the start of the US-led occupation a year ago.

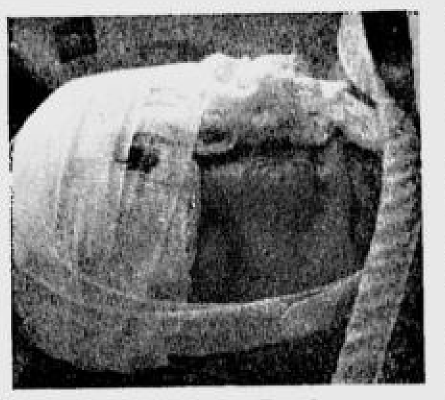
As relatives prepared to bury the victims, followers of rebel Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr planned a protest rally to blame the US-led occupation for the security breakdown.

US President George W. Bush accused Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network of being behind the morning rush-hour explosions.

"They just blew up innocent Iraqis," he said in Washington.

A senior military official in Baghdad said the Basra attacks bore the hallmarks of al-Qaida or its affiliates. "The method, the mode is consistent time after time—a spectacular event and a symbolic target," he said.

He pointed the finger at Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian militant with suspected links to al-Qaida, accused by US officials of orchestrating suicide attacks to spark a civil war between Iraq's minority Sunnis and majority Shiites.



RANDA Essam, 15, suffers from heavy injuries to her head after being hurt in one of the explosions. AP

The Basra blasts shocked a city which had seen little of the violence exploding elsewhere in Iraq this month.

US forces have intensified battles with Sunni insurgents in the western city of Fallujah and rolled back an uprising by Sadr's Mehdi Army militia across the mainly Shiite south.

Clashes flared in Karma, 16 km north of Fallujah, on Thursday. Guerrillas fired rocket-propelled grenades and mortars at US Marines backed by helicopters, witnesses said.

Witnesses said Fallujah frontlines were calm and a local official said police were collecting heavy weapons from fighters under a peace deal announced by US forces on Sunday.

A senior official of the US-led administration said the quantity and quality of arms turned in so far was unimpressive.

"It's lackluster, not terribly encouraging, not what we could consider demonstrating an effort to comply fully," he said.

The US military has repeatedly questioned the ability of Iraqi mediators to persuade Fallujah gunmen to disarm.

"It's not nearly enough and will not be seen as the capability to deliver," the official said of the weapons haul.

The US military is also demanding the surrender of those behind the murder and public mutilation of four American private security guards ambushed in Fallujah on March 31.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said he had no plans to send more troops to Basra in response to the blasts and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said suicide attacks would not derail plans to hand sovereignty to Iraqis at the end of June.

The US-led occupation which followed the toppling of Saddam Hussein is due to finish on June 30 with power handed to an interim Iraqi government, but transfer preparations have been eclipsed by bloodletting and hostage-taking this month.

Since the start of the war to oust Saddam in March last year, 511 US soldiers have been killed, Pentagon figures show.

More than 100 have been killed this month.

Denmark said a Danish businessman reported missing on April 11 had been found dead. An Italian hostage was killed this month by kidnappers demanding Italian troops leave Iraq. *Reuters*

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Poland may also pull out troops; US still upbeat

WASHINGTON—The White House insisted on Wednesday the US-led coalition in Iraq was strong despite comments from staunch ally Poland that it may join three other nations in withdrawing troops.

On a day when at least 68 people died in suicide car bombings in southern Iraq, President George W. Bush faced questions on Capitol Hill about whether enough money was being allocated to fund US military operations there this year.

"Be honest with the Congress, be honest with the American people. Every ground squirrel in this country knows that it's going to be $50 billion to $75 billion in additional money required to sustain us in Iraq for this year," Nebraska Republican Sen. Chuck Hagel told NBC's "Today" show.

The White House did not rule out seeking additional funding this year after obtaining $87 billion last year. "I think it totally depends on the circumstances on the ground," said spokesman Scott McClellan.

Spain's decision a week ago to withdraw its 1,400 troops has triggered second thoughts among the original 34-nation coalition in Iraq. Honduras and the Dominican Republic have said they also are withdrawing troops.

Thailand said on Tuesday it will withdraw its 451 medical and engineering troops from Iraq if they are attacked.

And on Wednesday, Poland said it was reviewing its position in Iraq but would not pull troops out suddenly or without Washington's approval. Poland has been a key US ally in Iraq. *Reuters*

CBS displays photos of dying Princess Diana

LONDON—British media and associates of Princess Diana expressed anger Thursday after a US television network broadcast photos of the dying princess taken moments after a car accident.

The Guardian newspaper said CBS had decided to "plumb new depths of prurience in the Princess Diana industry."

CBS' "48 Hours" program showed two black-and-white pictures taken by paparazzi at the scene of the Aug. 31, 1997 accident in Paris. Diana died hours later. Her companion, Dodi Fayed, and chauffeur Henri Paul also were killed.

The network insisted the pictures—which showed an unconscious Diana being treated by a doctor as she lay slumped in the back of a car in the Alma road tunnel—were not graphic or exploitative.

But Dodi Fayed's father, Mohamed al Fayed, said CBS had behaved in "disgraceful and insensitive" manner.

"CBS obviously don't care about the appalling effect of showing images of murder victims," said Fayed, who has long insisted that Diana and his son were murdered. A lengthy French investigation concluded the crash was an accident caused by drunk and speeding driver Paul.

Clarence House, the office of Diana's former husband, Prince Charles, and her two sons, declined to comment on the program.

CBS said the pictures were included in a confidential French investigators' file on the accident. No major media outlet had previously run pictures of the injured princess, although several are believed to have been offered for sale. *AP*

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Scientists create fatherless mouse

LONDON—Japanese and Korean scientists have created a fatherless mouse without using sperm in a reproductive feat akin to the birth of Dolly the sheep, the world's first cloned mammal.

Bees, ants, aphids and some fish and reptiles reproduce without having sex in a process called parthenogenesis. But creating a living mammal from same-sex parents was thought to be impossible.

Until now.

The birth of Kaguya, the daughter of two female mice, which is reported in the science journal Nature on Wednesday by Tomohiro Kono of Tokyo University of Agriculture, shows that a healthy mammal known as a parthenote can be created without any male help.

"The parthenote developed to adulthood with the ability to reproduce offspring," Kono and his colleagues said in the Nature report.

Mammals inherit one set of chromosomes from their mothers and another from their fathers. Embryos containing only female chromosomes usually die early in the womb and those with only male genetic material are abnormal.

Kono and his team overcame the problem and created Kaguya by fusing two female eggs after knocking out a key gene in the donor egg. The gene is involved in imprinting, a mechanism which controls the activity of genes inherited from the father and mother.

The fused eggs were chemically activated to produce embryos that were implanted into the wombs of mice.

"The paper shows that, like cloning, another asexual form of reproduction is possible in mice and may be possible in some other mammals," said Simon Best of the Biotechnology Industry Organization.

"However, this was achieved with even lower efficiency than the cloning process used to make Dolly and therefore it is even more unacceptable and unsafe to consider using this for humans," he added.

Only 0.6 percent of the embryos Kono and his colleagues created survived. It took hundreds of fused eggs to produce 28 offspring but Kaguya was the only mouse to survive. Others were stillborn or abnormal.

"This is an incredible achievement, the process of creating these mice required perseverance and patience: From around 600 eggs only two mice were created. As a result, this technique is far too complicated to be used in humans," said Prof. Azim Surani of the University of Cambridge in England.

But the research could improve understanding of genetic imprinting and what causes abnormalities in embryos, as well as knowledge about the beginning of life.

Kono said his results suggest that paternal imprinting prevents parthenogenesis in mammals and ensures a male role in reproduction.

"Until we fully understand the role and regulation of imprinted genes in development, it seems that the participation of the father in reproduction will remain necessary," David Loebel and Patrick Tam, of the University of Sydney in Australia, said in a commentary in the journal. *Reuters*

AZALEAS IN BLOOM
People admire Japanese azaleas in full bloom at the Nezu shrine in Tokyo April 22. The azaleas, about 3,000 flowering shrubs in about 50 varieties, attract more than 600,000 visitors during the two-week bloom season every year, a spokesperson of the shrine said. REUTERS

Half of Latin America wants money more than votes

LIMA—Latin America is enjoying an unprecedented run of democracy, but half its citizens would prefer a dictatorship if that improved their living standards, according to a UN-sponsored report released on Wednesday.

"Opinion polls tell us that today only about 50 percent of Latin Americans prefer democracy to authoritarian rule," said UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in a message to the launch in Lima of the UN Development Program-backed report.

"That is very sad. More important, it is wrong. The solution to Latin America's ills does not lie in a return to authoritarianism. It lies in a stronger and deeper-rooted democracy," Annan said.

But while the military has retreated to the barracks, democracy has not meant equality in Latin America, where the richest 10 percent have an income 30 times bigger than the poorest 10 percent. Sixty percent of children live in poverty and the average child goes to school for just 5.2 years.

"Latin America has carried out deep political and economic reforms in the last 20 years and the results are terrible," said the project's leader, ex-Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo. "After 20 years of sacrifice, poverty remains."

He said it was "irresponsible to ignore the danger" which that posed for the region's young democracies.

The report canvassed 231 leaders, including serving and former heads of state, and included polls that surveyed some 20,000 people in the 18 countries studied, most of which had authoritarian governments a quarter of a century ago.

Interestingly, the leaders surveyed did not feel they themselves wielded real power. That lay with economic groups, according to more than three-quarters of respondents, and with the media, according to over two-thirds of those questioned.

The research—which took in all of continental Latin America plus the Dominican Republic—was conducted in 2002.

"We'd be extremely disingenuous if we thought democracy today (in Latin America) enjoyed robust health," former Uruguayan President Julio Maria Sanguinetti told reporters.

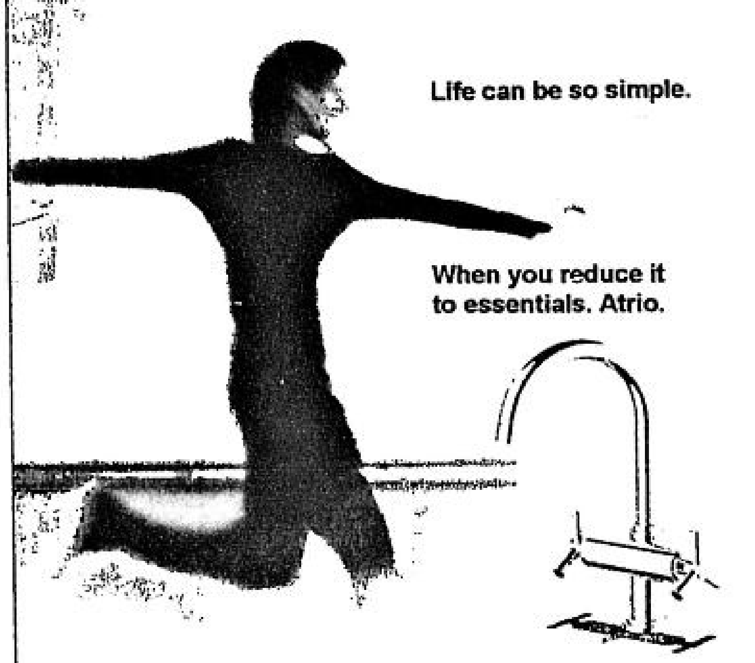
Caputo, 60, said he had spent two-thirds of his life under dictatorship.

"Does the absence of a coup indicate democracy is healthy?" he asked. "No. As we are so conditioned to think only coups endanger democracy, we tend to forget other dangers."

One problem the report highlighted was the lack of deep-rooted political parties and the prevalence of ad hoc movements, led by charismatic leaders known as "caudillos."

It found that 64.6 percent of those surveyed believed their governors broke campaign promises because they had lied to win the vote; that 41.9 percent tolerated some corruption provided "things work"; and that 54.7 percent would rather have a hard-line regime than a democratic one if authoritarianism would resolve their economic problems.

Caputo said that more than a dozen Latin American presidents in the last decade did not finish their terms, although old-style military coups at times followed by bloodbaths appeared to be a thing of the past. *Reuters*



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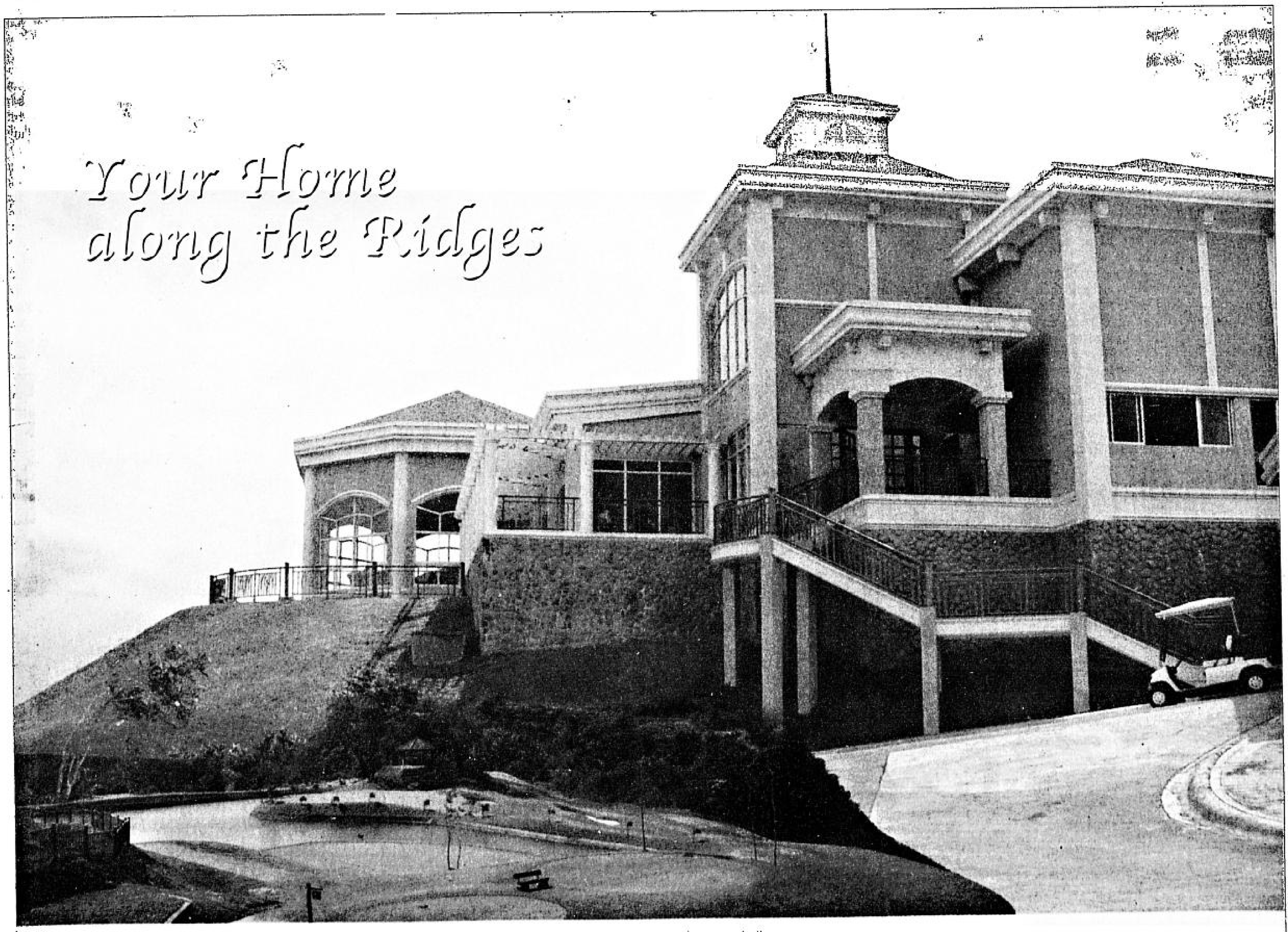

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Security Council backs probe of kickbacks in Iraq food deal

By Evelyn Leopold

UNITED NATIONS—Paul Volcker, the former chairman of the US Federal Reserve, began a high-level investigation on Wednesday into allegations of kickbacks and bribes in the UN-run oil-for-food program for Iraq.

Volcker assumed his post as head of a three-man team after he was assured that all 15 members of the UN Security Council adopted a resolution to back the investigation, which will include a probe of contracts with Iraq around the world.

"We will be following the money as well as we can," Volcker Volcker told a news conference.

"I wanted a resolution to make sure that member governments and member states knew what they were getting into," he said.

The council's resolution called "on member states, including their national regulatory authorities, to cooperate fully by all appropriate means with the inquiry."

Under the now-defunct program, Iraq was permitted to sell oil in order to buy civilian goods. Its purpose was to ease the impact on ordinary Iraqis of sanctions imposed after the 1991 Gulf War.

But Volcker acknowledged his group would not have subpoena power and was relying on voluntary cooperation from foreign governments, whose officials and firms may have made deals with Saddam Hussein.

He predicted he would get more cooperation from UN staff, where he was assured that diplomatic immunity would be waived.

The panel intends to hire investigators, accountants and legal specialists in an effort to analyze contracts, he said.

The program allowed Saddam's government to choose buyers of its oil and suppliers of goods.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said he took the allegations seriously, which include accusations that a senior UN official took a bribe from Saddam's government.

"Obviously, these are serious allegations which we take seriously. And this is why we've put together a very serious group to investigate it," Annan said. "I want to get to the truth, and I want to get to the bottom of this."

The General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of the US Congress, says Iraqi elites pocketed $4.4 billion by imposing illegal surcharges on oil sales.

Iraq is estimated to have smuggled $5.7 billion in oil outside the UN program, which amounted to some $67 billion from December 1996 until last year, a few months after the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Reuters

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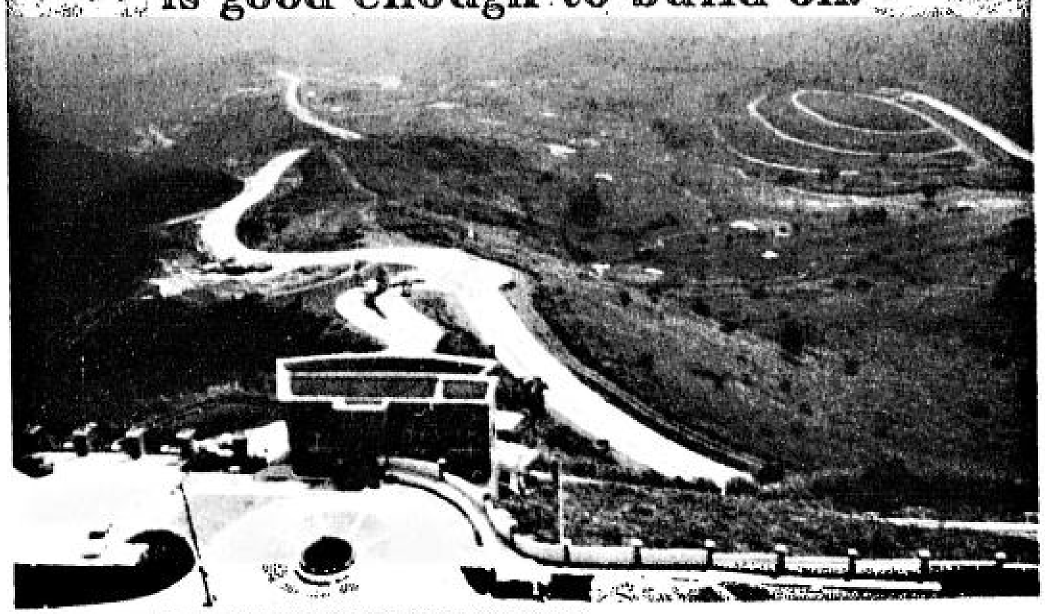

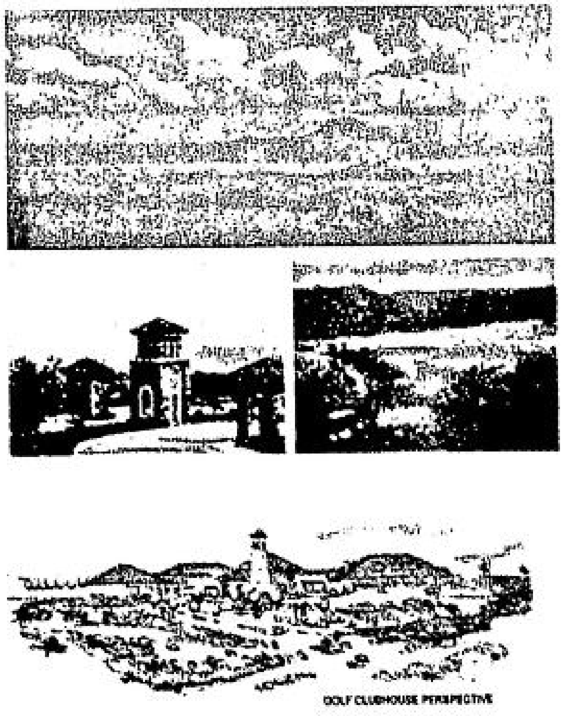

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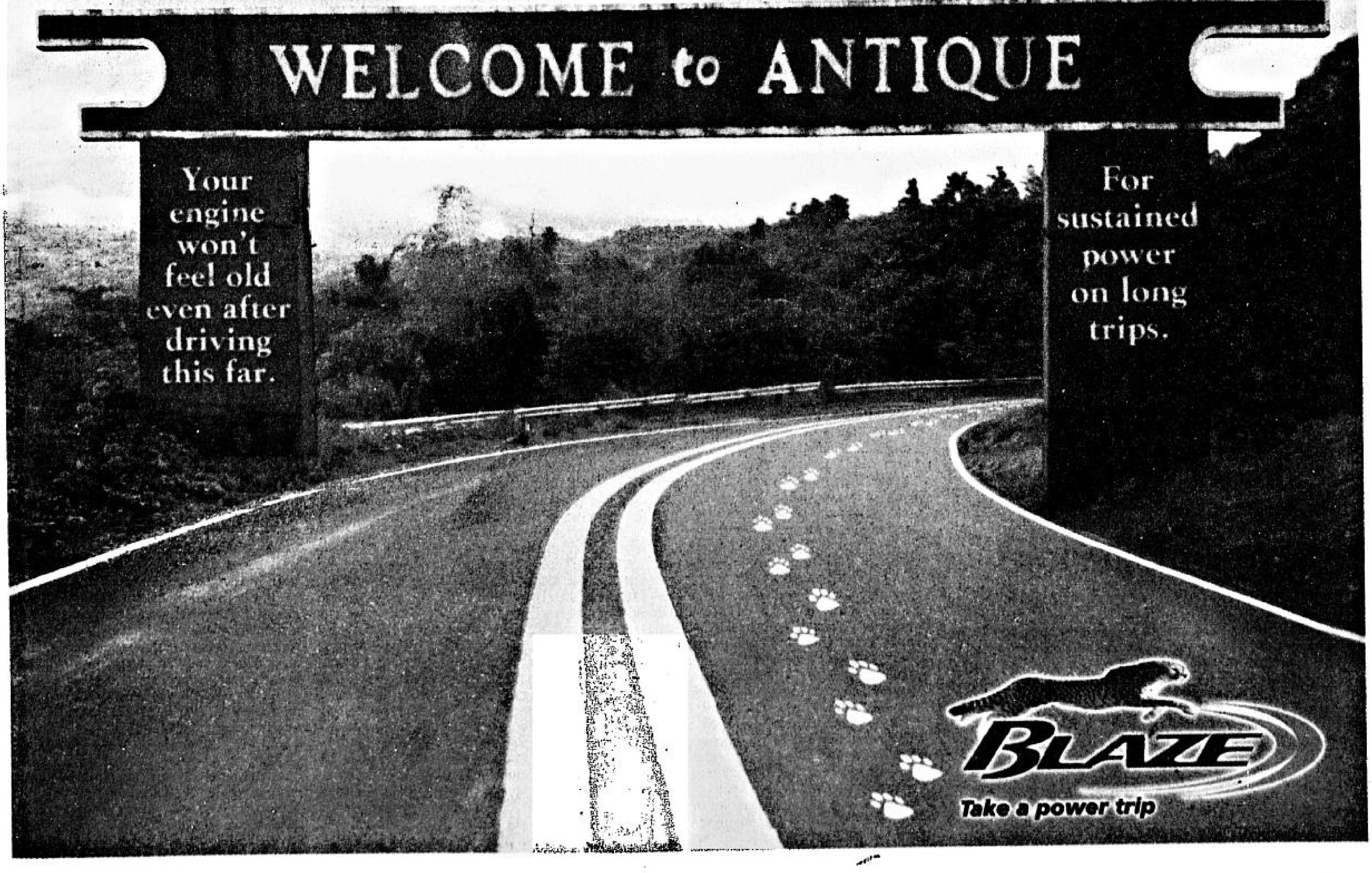
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OPINION

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New boat people

IN ITS provocative decision to send tourists to the disputed Spratlys, Vietnam is incurring the ire not only of the other claimants but also of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). Vietnam is showing the arrogance that is not to be expected of a relatively new member of the Asean, which, after all, is committed to fostering comity and understanding among nations in the region.

EDITORIAL

Hanoi claims that the tour is perfectly within its right as it has "indisputable sovereignty" over the entire Spratlys. Can there be anything more highhanded than that? At the very least, Hanoi should have exercised restraint and maintained the status quo.

This is not the first time that Hanoi has pushed its claim on the Spratlys in an arrogant, unneighborly fashion. In 2002, it fired shots at Philippine military planes inspecting that part of the Spratlys claimed by Manila. Previously, it had clashed with the Chinese in the area. Hanoi seems to be recklessly pushing its claim too far.

In its latest move, Hanoi is sending a tourist ship in the territory where it had set up military facilities. In the guise of presenting the tour as a purely private matter, Hanoi said the tour is being run by the Hai Thanh company, which is however affiliated with the Navy Command. The fact that a private tourism company has ties with the military should show how the communist bosses of Vietnam have a totalitarian hold on just about anything, be it public affairs or private enterprise, be it civilian or military matters.

It does not matter to Vietnam that it is a signatory to the convention on the Conduct of Parties in the Spratlys. The code, which urges claimants not to do anything that will complicate the territorial issue or escalate the tension there, is non-binding, so it behooves its signatories to exercise utmost restraint and maturity in dealing with the Spratlys question. But apparently restraint and maturity are not virtues to be expected of the Vietnamese.

China has already protested vehemently against the tour. The Philippines is going about the diplomatic fracas cautiously, giving Hanoi the benefit of the doubt. The Department of Foreign Affairs has hinted it would resolve the matter through diplomatic consultation with other Asean members. This is a civilized response that may not however stop Vietnam, which, as the record shows, is too much of a bully and a big head.

Clearly Hanoi is pushing the envelope. It does not matter that it endangers the life of those who have registered for the tour. "We have to learn some experience from the first tour before we could offer regular tours to both local and foreign tourists in the future," a communist boss said.

We don't know what lesson Vietnam will learn from this latest foolishness. Perhaps a new lesson on pushing the frontiers of tourism: from making the most tourism dollars out of the French colonial structures and bombed-out and bloodied Ho Chi Minh trail to making the most of potential tourism (and petroleum) dollars out of the flashpoint on the South China Sea. What areas would be safe from the predators of Vietnamese tourism? Not the turtle nests and marine life preserves of the Spratlys.

Ah, but Vietnam has learned long ago its lesson. In sending off a rickety boatload of "tourists" to the Spratlys to strike a potential tourism mine, it is just repeating what it did some decades back, when it caused to be sent off, directly or indirectly, boatloads of Indochinese refugees to its neighbors, the Philippines notably. These refugees were fleeing from the hard and repressive conditions of their homeland. So when the tour arrives in the Spratlys this month, it would be déjà vu, indeed.

From boat people to boat tourists! How the times have changed! And how little they have changed!

Vietnam or Lebanon?

IS Iraq Bush's Vietnam? Like with every historical analogy, there are obvious objections to this one: The Vietnam War lasted 18 years and cost 58,000 American soldiers their lives. Besides, the Americans can still assume that a silent majority of Iraqis are happy about the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

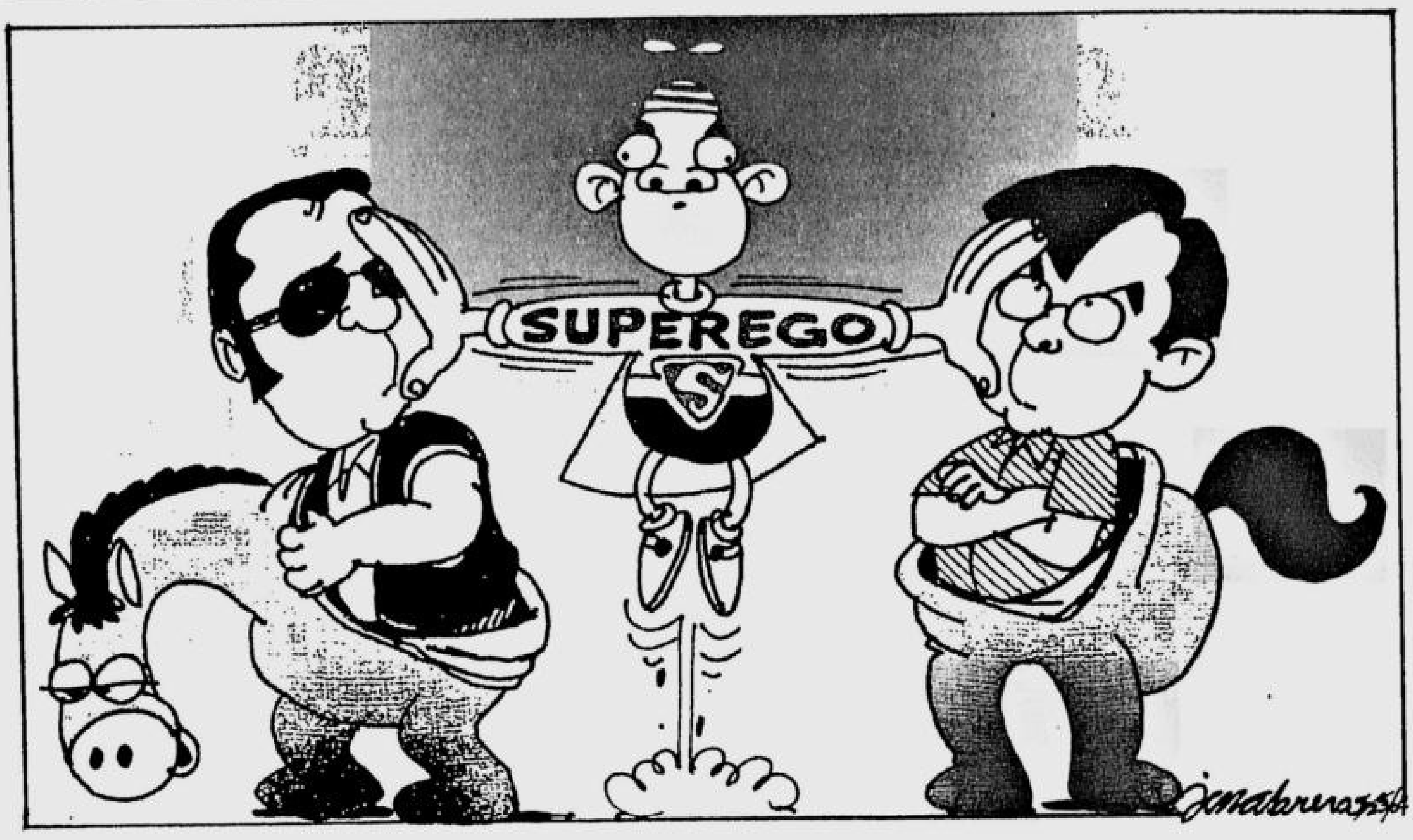
Another less flattering comparison applies: Iraq is Bush's Lebanon.

FOREIGN COMMENT

When Israel's troops marched to Beirut in 1982, they succeeded in expelling the PLO. Yet the overall record turned out to be negative. The PLO reorganized itself, Hezbollah solidified, the hostility against Israel intensified, and in the end the troops withdrew helter-skelter, worn down by the daily skirmishes.

More and more, the doubts gnaw at many Americans. Was it wrong after all? That's the fundamental question that no one can evade.

Der Tagesspiegel (Berlin)



SC: Ban on opinion polls 'unconstitutional'

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LAST April 16, this column suggested the enactment of a law banning opinion polls before an election because they unfairly influence people to vote for candidates leading in the surveys. The polls, I said, can be manipulated to achieve this "bandwagon effect." Pollsters, therefore, become kingmakers who can make certain candidates win through their surveys. I said we have passed a law regulating political advertising to make the playing field even, why not one for opinion polls?

Well, it turns out we already passed such a law but the Supreme Court, by a majority of two, struck it down as "unconstitutional." Election lawyer Romulo Makalintal said that Section 5.4 of Republic Act 9006, or the Fair Election Act of 2001, prohibited the publication of surveys "affecting national candidates 15 days before an election" and surveys "affecting local candidates seven days before an election." However, on May 5, 2001, acting on a petition filed by the Social Weather Stations and Kamahalan Publishing Corp., the Supreme Court by a vote of 7-5-3 (seven justices concurring, five justices dissenting, and three on leave or not participating) declared that provision of RA 9006 as an "unconstitutional abridgement of freedom of speech, expression and the press."

The majority of seven justices held that the provision "is invalid because: (1) it imposes a prior restraint on the freedom of expression, (2) it is a direct and total suppression of a category of expression even though such suppression is only for a limited period, and (3) government interest sought to be promoted can be achieved by means other than the suppression of freedom of expression."

That decision of the seven justices is the reason why today surveys can be conducted and their results published even a day before the election or on election day itself, Makalintal said.

However, the five dissenting justices, who spoke through then Associate Justice Santiago M. Kapunan, pointed out that "surveys taken very close to the election might be taken as indicative of a firm and final tally of the results, giving more motive to fly-by-night pollsters or survey groups controlled by vested interests to manipulate the survey results." The dissenting opinion also quoted from the deliberations of the bicameral conference committee wherein then Sen. Raul Roco said "that last-minute surveys generate 'junking' of candidates at the tail end of the surveys by their own party mates and supporters."

The *consuelo de bobo* is that under RA 9006, a candidate or political party that has doubts on the results of the survey has all the right to examine or verify the raw data which were used. The candidate or political party may refute or confirm their accuracy.

And anyway those candidates who lose in the surveys don't believe the polls while only those who win believe them.

* * *

Another letter is from Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte answering charges aired by former Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. at a Kapihan sa Manila forum and reported in this column of March 31. To be fair to Belmonte, we allowed him to answer the charges in the April 12 *kapihan*.

Belmonte refuted the charges one by one:

1.That Quezon City is not the richest city, but Makati.

"The Commission on Audit, in its 2002 report, said Quezon City has the highest revenue. The disparity in (Mathay's) and COA's figures stemmed from the fact that he did not include the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) in his computation."

2. That the increased revenues were derived from unprecedented increases in tax rates ranging from 145 to 499 percent. Mathay implied that this is illegal.

It was very legal, retorted Belmonte. "What we did was simply adjust the tax rates of Quezon City to those authorized under the Local Government Code of 1991. Obviously, Quezon City had to increase its business tax rates which had been kept unusually low under Mr. Mathay's administration. Other cities in Metro Manila took advantage of this law to raise their business taxes while Mathay did not.

"Taking into consideration the savings the businesses concerned gained during the regime of low business taxes, we believe that the adjustment of the rates was long overdue and justifiably fair."

3. That the auction sale of tax delinquent properties was one of the reasons for the increase in Quezon City's income and that amnesty is the better solution.

"Amnesty is a poor substitute for good governance and is self-defeating," replied Belmonte. "Mathay had an amnesty every year yet he never reached his revenue targets. Public auction is the preferred remedy in taxation. Instead of rewarding the delinquent taxpayers, we have given a 20 percent discount on prompt payment."

4. On the cases pending in court questioning the new tax rates.

True, admitted Belmonte, but Mathay did not mention that then Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong reversed Secretary Hernando Perez's earlier ruling in the Diamond Motors case and squarely decided in Quezon City's favor on all the issues raised by the plaintiff corporations. The later decision of Secretary Merceditas Gutierrez on the Philip Morris case ruled purely on the procedural issue. A motion for reconsideration has been filed by Quezon City.

These cases will eventually end up in the Supreme Court, said Belmonte, who expressed confidence that the Quezon City government's position would be upheld. "In the meantime," he said, "we have invested P3.689 billion in infrastructure projects, there for all to see, which greatly strengthens the underpinnings of the city's economy. We have a cash balance of P2.729 billion in the general fund as of April 1, 2004."

Pope says…

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

EVERYONE of course will be scrambling to say the Pope's remarks are an endorsement of her or his presidential bid and an indictment of her or his rivals. In a message relayed to Philippine Ambassador to the Vatican Leonidas Vera, the Pope said Christian officials should be pillars of moral rectitude and "use their conscience, which at all times shuns any type of graft and corruption." He reminded Filipinos that fair and honest elections are the true measure of democracy in any country.

The reminders are not unlike the one Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales issued a couple of weeks ago, which Prospero Pichay seized upon as an indictment of FPJ and an endorsement of GMA. In his guidelines, Rosales said the candidates the voters should choose should be deeply moral rather than hugely popular, should have genuine concern for the poor rather than a simulated version of it. While that clearly indicted FPJ, because he is the popular candidate and because his pro-*masa* stance, like Erap's *para sa mahirap* one, is writ only in the movies, it indicted GMA as well. You go through his list, as I did in a column, and GMA fails in every one of them.

Ditto here. FPJ may be an unknown quantity as far as the corruption quotient is concerned, but not so the people around him. That fact he just emphasized the other week when he—and Loren Legarda, erstwhile pillar of Edsa II—appeared in a picture with Imelda Marcos. They all had their arms raised, Loren closest to Imelda. For a group that had studiously managed to distance itself from Erap to suddenly announce itself as Marcos associates was laughable. Truly, the Lord works in mysterious ways.

As to Panfilo Lacson, well, he was Erap's fair-haired boy and foremost beneficiary of his patronage and largesse. Erap was grooming him to succeed him and collected a pirate's treasure for the purpose—not least through the PNP, which funneled monies from various rackets to the top. It is a testament only to Victor Corpus' sleuthing abilities that he never managed to pin Lacson down on ill-gotten wealth charges. And it is a testament to the quality of our courts that he is free to run for president rather than languish in jail for the massacre of suspected kidnappers. Those cannot possibly be the qualities the Pope has in mind for the person who will lead this Christian nation out of the wilderness.

But neither may GMA take comfort from all this. At the very least, she cannot pass the test of keeping these elections fair and clean. To this day, not one of the Comelec officials who participated in a scam with MegaPacific, a scam involving the grant of a billion-peso contract to automate counting to the most unqualified bidder, has been punished for it. Nor has the money been returned. Instead, what GMA has done is to populate the one agency tasked to ensure honest elections with people who cannot count. And to banish Comelec officials who complain that their favorite office is being conscripted to do the devil's work to Hades.

Just as well, she cannot pass the anti-corruption and morality test with her patent and reckless use of people's money to advertise herself. I am sorry that Honeygirl de Leon has been struck down by an affliction, but I am not sorry that I have been critical of her for helping her boss fry the taxpayer in his own fat. I went up to Infanta last Sunday to attend the installation of its new parish priest, and along the whole length of the highway all you could see were GMA posters. Nearly all of them government productions, and therefore paid for by us. For every poster of her rivals, there were 10 of GMA's.

Frankly, I don't know why we—the media, the Church, civil society, and the various guardians of morality and democracy—keep complaining about our elected public officials being corrupt when we gleefully agree to their practicing corruption in seeking to become so. We agree to our officials stealing our money to get to, or remain in, power, let's shut up when they steal some more after they've done so.

But infinitely more than that, it's hard to see how GMA can be the Pope's ideal candidate when GMA has gone against the Pope's teachings on two very vital issues. The first is capital punishment. The Pope has been pleading for GMA to stay the executions of Death Row convicts, but to win over the Chinese community, which has been victimized by kidnappers, GMA was exceptionally eager some months ago to make a show of sending a kidnapper or two to their Maker. It was only when international opinion became strident that she desisted from her plan.

The second and far more important issue is the American invasion of Iraq. That was what it was: it wasn't a war, it was an invasion. As Richard Clarke shows, something that was already patent then, George Bush has always had the hots for Iraq, and wanted it more than al-Qaida. Iraq never represented a clear and present danger to America, as every expert, not least the UN chief arms inspector, had been saying in categorical terms. The invasion was immoral, and the Pope, along with everyone with a conscience—ah, but the Pope is right about conscience being a buffer against corruption, including the one that ravages the soul—had every reason to oppose it.

But GMA preferred to heed Bush rather than the Pope. Well, Bush is isolated now. Only GMA now thinks he is still rebuilding Iraq.

You go by the Pope's—as much as Archbishop Rosales'—guidelines in voting for a president, you have only two candidates to consider. That is either Raul Roco or Eddie Villanueva. Rosales did say, vote for the right candidate, not the popular one—or the one who's buying votes with PhilHealth cards. And the Pope did say, use your conscience.

Sentimental journey

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE RETURN of Raul Roco to rejoin the campaign after seeking medical treatment in the United States is largely a sentimental journey. His presence is unlikely to create a decisive swing of voters that can tilt the precarious balance between the two front-runners, President Macapagal-Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr. Neither will his return make the minor parties coalesce.

From photographs, Roco looks healthier and more buoyant than he was when he left the country a week ago. But his return will not hide the fact that he has been incapacitated and his temporary absence has dislocated his campaign, which was already floundering at the time of his abrupt departure.

What Roco will do when he returns to the hustings is everybody's guess. This is a question that begs clarification even among his die-hard followers. Will he endorse anyone, or will he leave them to decide of their own accord? Already his Alliance for Hope has been left in disarray following his departure, and in his brief absence, Lito Osmeña of Promdi, an alliance partner, has stepped into the vacuum and taken command of a group that he can direct to support any candidate of his choice.

Alternatively, Roco's unguided, if not misguided, hard core followers could stubbornly vote for Roco, in a demonstration of faith in a lost cause. In such a case, this bloc of hardcore vote will be denied to either the President or Poe.

In this eventuality, Roco's return will have little political significance at all. All it can do is make Roco feel good that he still has the physical stamina to reengage in the campaign.

The important question that has been overlooked is, where will the young voters of this country direct their votes now that their hope has been shattered by the disability of their rallying point? None of the opinion surveys since last November has considered the demographic profile of the voters. The surveys only showed the ratings of the first five presidential candidates according to regions and socio-economic classification (i.e., upper and middle classes, the poor and the very poor). How the candidates rated among voters, especially the young, has been completely ignored.

Roco likes to believe that his natural constituency is made up of the upper and middle classes, a category in which both he and Ms Macapagal are competing for support. But Roco has claimed his strength lies among the youth and that they identify with him more than with his rivals.

Let's take a look at the demographic picture. According to the Commission on Population, voters aged 18-24 make up nearly 30 percent of the 43 million registered voters nationwide. Half of the country's nearly 84 million population is made up of those aged 21 and below. However, the Commission on Elections has noted that about 4.5 million registered to vote for the first time last year.

The PopCom says that young voters would dominate the next three presidential elections beginning this year because of their growing numbers. "We must not underestimate the power of the young," says PopCom Director Tomas Osias.

The earlier they are educated, the better they would be at making decisions, including those concerning national leadership. None of the candidates, except for Roco, has highlighted the concerns of the young related to education, health services and reproductive health needs.

The concerns of the young have not been adequately articulated in the social and political platforms of the main candidates, in particularly Poe who is running on no platform at all, merely banking on his movie popularity to carry him to the presidency. Without a political platform that captures their concerns and their aspirations, the young voters are left to decide for themselves as to whom they will entrust their future.

The focus of attention in this campaign, which is tightly contested by Ms Macapagal and Poe, is on how this near-deadlock can be broken, and on whether the unification of the opposition would be critical in deciding the results of the elections. Sen. Panfilo Lacson, according to the surveys, can count on 10 percent which, hypothetically, can be shifted to Poe, if Lacson joins the opposition coalition.

Ignored is the young voters' bloc, which is around 20 percent. Assuming that they are Roco's constituency, the question is to whom will they shift if it becomes clear to them that Roco can't win. The young voters are not *"trapo* voters," have minds of their own and cannot be herded like sheep even by Roco himself. These voters are better educated than Poe, and therefore, cannot identify themselves with a high school dropout who has not presented a platform that addresses their concerns.

Left to their own devices, they are unlikely to swing behind Poe. What is certain is that those who registered will vote according to their individual perception of their interests.

How many of the young Ms Macapagal can capture is crucial. It depends on whether she can shift the focus of her campaign to the young in the last two weeks of the campaign. This is a matter of tactical shift of emphasis, and Poe cannot do this anymore.

If this vote can be tapped and harnessed, its effect can be more critical than the unification of the opposition whose prospects have dimmed. The young have different values than the traditional voters. They can't be bought and don't respond to blandishment. They are waiting for a vehicle that can offer hope of fulfillment of their aspirations for fundamental social change.

A constituency for reproductive health

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AS I write this, the "grand gathering of population and reproductive health advocates," called "Hataw ng Sambayanan sa Halalan 2004," is about to begin, starting with a human chain around the Quezon Memorial Circle, after which the participants will march to Amoranto Stadium for the grand rally.

The rally, to be participated in by women's organizations, reproductive health advocates, community organizations and urban poor groups, youth organizations and members of political parties and party-list groups, is meant to demonstrate broad public support for reproductive health and rights. The size of the rally is also meant to call attention to the clamor for candidates to make their positions known on the need for policy and program support for family planning and other reproductive health needs.

Invited to speak at the rally are Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who is running for reelection under the K-4 banner; Ermin Garcia, spokesperson of presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson; representatives of other presidential candidates; reelectionist Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte; as well as other national and local candidates, including those for party list.

"Hataw ng Sambayanan" is the high point of a nearly year-long campaign to elevate population concerns, family planning and other elements of reproductive health to a campaign issue. It is meant to call the attention of both candidates and voters to the need to give serious thought to such matters as: our rate of population growth, the right of individuals and couples to choose the method of their choice in planning their families, the right of young people to information and services on reproductive health, and the impact of a growing population on the environment and the economy.

* * *

FOR months now, the member-groups of a coalition called "Population and Reproductive Health Movement," the Philippine NGO Council on Population, Health and Welfare (PNGOC), Friendly Care, Foundation for Adolescent Development and the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), have sponsored activities—from symposiums on issues of reproductive health to televised debates, from voter education seminars to dialogues with candidates—focused on raising public awareness of the issues and creating a constituency for reproductive health and rights.

One of the most important activities of the coalition was sponsoring part of an "Ulat ng Bayan" survey of Pulse Asia intended to trace public opinion support for family planning and officials espousing sound policies.

Actually, the survey results weren't all that surprising or new. If anything, they underscored what population advocates have been saying for years: that the majority of Filipinos (97 percent in the "Ulat ng Bayan") think family planning is important to them, that they support the right of couples to plan their families and make their own choices, and that many would, in fact, vote for candidates who publicly support this right.

Which is why, when some candidates say there is need to "respect the thoughts of the majority" on this issue, a way of soft-pedaling their support for the Church's disapproval of all family planning methods save for natural family planning, I wonder if they really are aware of what the majority thinks on this matter. It seems that ordinary Filipinos have moved far beyond conventional positions on the issue, outpacing even officials and opinion leaders.

* * *

BY COINCIDENCE, a friend sent me these excerpts from an article, entitled "In Defense of Woman Suffrage," written by Maria Paz Mendoza-Guazon, an early suffragist, and published in the Feb. 27, 1923 issue of The Manila Times. I thought it apropos to share her thoughts on suffrage and family planning, which she calls "depopulation," if only to show how long Philippine society has been debating these issues:

"The strongest argument against Woman Suffrage is that it will depopulate the country, because higher education tends to limit birthrate. Woman Suffrage is the consequence of higher education and not its cause. An ignorant woman has no notion that she is an integral part of the nation, that she and her children will suffer if the government of her country goes wrong… This woman will never move a finger to help her countrymen, because she does not know the meaning of country or countrymen…This type of woman will bear with a martyr's faith the kicks and blows of her Master should he be, as many masters are, a cruel man or an alcoholic. This type of women will never demand Woman Suffrage.

"Higher education teaches man that woman is his equal and not his serf; it develops his sense of justice and true manhood; it compels him to help woman rise to his level and standard, for this is the only way to make her keep pace with him…

"The progress of civilization compels both, but especially the male of the species, to wait for several years before he is able to earn enough or to attain sufficient success either in the professions or in business to warrant marriage. It is only natural to expect a smaller number of children from an educated couple than from an uneducated man who marries at 18 or 20 a girl of 16 or 18. A low birthrate among the educated then is the result of the length of time employed in the preparation of one's life work, the effect of high cost of living, especially in the cities, the need for more careful rearing of children to fit each one for a struggle that is growing more intense every day. If a low birthrate is the outcome of higher education, it will prevail, regardless of whether or not Woman Suffrage is granted to our women. Therefore, Woman Suffrage will not bring about the much-feared depopulation of the Islands."

Respect for the flag

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

THE OFFICIAL Gazette and the records of the Senate and the Lower House will show anyone who cares to read them that we do not lack laws. It amuses me that the solution to every problem seems to be enacting a new law or ordinance somewhere. Our problem is not in the quantity or quality of existing laws; it is compliance and enforcement which are lacking.

Over the past week, I have been watching all the political advertisements on television, noting how aspiring government officials are packaged for public consumption. TV news also gives us reports on the campaigns of the various candidates for public office. I have noticed that the flag or the colors of the flag seem to be in the background all the time. One who is familiar with the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines (Republic Act 8491) can easily spot a number of infractions, the most glaring of which is the wearing by candidates of shirts resembling the flag. It is one thing to wave a flag or to wear a flag patch, but to use the design of the flag on a shirt makes one uneasy, whether there is a law or no law banning it.

There is much about respect for the flag that I learned as a Boy Scout: how to raise it, how to lower it, how to fold it and how dispose of it when it is worn or tattered. One would think that all citizens of the Philippines would know this, but you will be surprised at what many people do not know.

For example, we all know that one of the significant features of our flag (as compared with the flags of other countries) is that it can signify a state of war or a state of peace. When the flag is flown on a flagpole, we have the blue field on top in time of peace and the red field up in time of war.

But when the flag is hung on the wall, how should it be done? Once when President Macapagal-Arroyo was reading a speech in the Japanese Diet, some people noticed that the flag was hung in a way that signified war. The quick excuse was that the photograph sent to the newspapers was reversed. When that was found to be false, the blame was shifted to Japanese protocol officers who could not be expected to know all the intricacies of our flag. Eventually our own protocol officers had to accept the blame.

When the flag is hung vertically on a wall, we all know that the sun and the stars should be on top not below, but where to put the blue and red fields can be confusing. The blue field should be on the left (from the observer's point of view) in times of peace and the red field on the left (again from the observer's viewpoint) in times of war.

We all know that the flag should be handled with reverence and respect and that it should not be allowed to touch the ground. So I was surprised to find out that the flag can be tied into a knot and flown on a flagpole as a distress signal.

Then there are some practical but esoteric provisions in the code. For example, when flown with the flags of other countries, our flag should be of equal size and each flag should be placed on separate staffs (not one on top of another like pork on a barbecue stick). Our flag, naturally, is hoisted first and lowered last.

When displayed in a semi-circle of flags with other countries our flag should be at the center—unless of course our flag is flying abroad and then the host country's flag takes precedence. When displayed in a row or in a parade with flags of other countries, the flag shall be on the left (from the observer's point of view) of the other flags. Then the flags of other countries should be arranged in alphabetical order from left to right.

Reading the law can make for some boring reading, so it was a good idea that the National Historical Institute (as the implementing agency of RA 8491) published an illustrated guide to the Flag Code and its implementing rules and regulations. Published in 2002 and with an introduction by Teodoro S. Atienza, chief of the NHI Flag and Heraldry Division, it makes following the law easier.

Obviously we do not mutilate, deface, defile, trample on, cast contempt, etc. on the symbol of our country. We do not use the flag as draper, festoon tablecloth, or as a pennant on the side, back and top of motor vehicles. We don't use the flag for trademark or commercial purposes or display it below paintings, pictures, states or platforms. We don't have to be told that flags are out of place in "discotheques, cockpits, night and day clubs, casinos, gambling joints and places of vice or where frivolity prevails." We do not draw or print other things or figures on the flag.

The list of "don'ts" is rather long, but it seems to have overlooked a practice I see quite often. At the start of programs when the National Anthem is sung, people rise from their seats, face the flag, put their palms over their hearts and begin. In some places, the flag which would naturally hang limply from the flagpole is made to fly by putting an electric fan below it. I must admit that a flag waving in the breeze is a beautiful sight, but to force it to move this way is contrived and disrespectful. Worse, in the absence of an electric fan, somebody will raise it from one corner and hold it aloft while the people sing.

Maybe I'm too sensitive, but that is how I feel after reading the illustrated Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Pro-family workplaces

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I HEADED a health non-government organization for 15 years, a time when I picked up many insights into Filipino society and culture. One thing that always amazed me was the way staff members would approach me, face really serious, to ask for permission to get married.

Well, maybe permission is too strong a term to use. What was actually happening was the *"paalam"* process, literally to let someone know, but with an element of asking for approval. Initially I found this rather strange, and I still make it a point to tell staff members the decision to marry should be a couple's. But I'm realizing, too, that *"paalam"* is a Filipino way of acknowledging someone who is older, and presumably wiser, to ask not just for approval but for counsel and advice.

The office *"paalam"* for marriage is therefore an opportunity to talk about family life. In my own experiences, it starts with sorting out the decision itself to get married. This was how I learned, long before the era of surveys of young adult sexuality, that so many of our marriages occur because the girl is pregnant. The pressures are tremendous, splitting families into two camps: those insisting the marriage take place and those who oppose the marriage, not so much because the couple might be unprepared but because they don't like the prospective groom or bride.

In the context of my own office, this marriage *"paalam"* has alerted me to the need for offices to have a comprehensive program around, not just family planning but family life and sexuality in general and that the program should include unmarried staff members.

Philippine laws require that large companies provide family planning education. I know that there are enough problems enforcing that law for the big companies but those of us who believe in family planning should be doing our share even with medium- and small-sized companies.

Our health NGO did have the advantage that we were doing family planning training workshops anyway, so we made sure staff members got to attend the sessions, where they got state-of-the-art information on all methods, "natural" and "artificial." Yet, thinking back, I believe the workshops were only a small part of the office's family planning education. Even more important was the staff's knowledge that they could openly talk about family planning and sexuality, even over lunch or while commuting home. Soon, both female and male staff were sharing their experiences and referring each other to physicians and clinics where they could get family planning services.

The results have been heartwarming. It used to be that staff members would announce, in the most glum and anxious voices, that they were expecting another baby. These days, there's more of jubilation and anticipation. Most staff members have two or three children, spaced at least three years apart, often even longer.

Our annual Christmas parties turn into a celebration of the family, as staff members welcome the new babies, while complimenting the older children: "Wow, he's taking computer science in UP," or "Oh, look, she's taller now than her father and I heard she's among the best in her class."

Family life is strengthened when parents and children are spared the stress that comes with having "too many, too soon."

The benefits affect the entire office as well. Our office does not allow loans so staff members have come up with their own *paluwagan*, a kind of cooperative fund for emergencies; yet that fund is rarely used because staff members are able to budget their resources.

All that stands in sharp contrast to offices that offer little or nothing by way of family planning services. I've seen it all too often in offices as well as homes (domestic workers are especially neglected when it comes to education on family planning): endless cycles of absences, leaves, sloppy work and, worst of all, debts. The litany of woes is familiar to office managers: salary advances for a delivery, the baby's milk, a sick child, a hospitalized child, the hospitalized child's sister who got infected too, tuition, books, allowances, another delivery… hey, didn't the youngest just turn a year old? The women suffer more, having to bear the brunt of responsibilities, literally converting a job into *hanapbuhay*—looking for life.

I'm encouraged to see our business sector now taking family planning seriously. Iloilo's Chamber of Commerce and Industry hosted a population and development meeting yesterday and I hear that other major cities will have similar conferences, partly to send a message to politicians to take population issues more seriously.

In the long term, the entire country stands to gain from this foresight. Again if I might refer back to the health NGO I worked with, talk about family planning has actually become rare, mainly because it's become part of common knowledge. These days, the staff members talk more about educational plans, a retirement fund (knowing how small the SSS retirement checks are) and lately, a cooperative housing scheme.

When people worry less about day-to-day survival, they can better plan for the future. In our health NGO, the entire staff, from utility workers to the medical director, have shared dreams of a stable life here in the Philippines, of getting their kids into UP or one of the better universities, of producing a new generation of Filipinos who won't think of families simply in terms of mouths to feed, but of children, human beings with minds and hearts to nurture.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

THEY SAID

'Culture uplift'

"We always accept that we are a Third World country. People always say *'Hay naku, 'wag muna kayong mag-*culture culture, *wala naman kayong makain pa.'* That's unfair. People don't realize that it's the culture that uplifts you; it is what will give you the inspiration to live. As an artist you have to be free. You have to fight."

—Director Maryo J. de los Reyes on government agencies not being that friendly to artists

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LETTERS

Corruption went down under GMA

OPINION columns are opinion columns. But when a columnist distorts facts to argue his opinion, this is a breach of journalistic ethics.

Conrad de Quiros distorted facts in his April 13 column. He wrote: "The level of corruption has risen (during President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's term), according to the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report. Among 102 countries, we were 92 last year, slipping from 76 to 2002."

This statement is false. De Quiros was referring to the report's Corruption Subindex, but didn't mention the actual scores. The chief economist of the Makati Business Club, which is the Philippine research arm of the WEF Global Competitiveness Report, noted: "The country's score on the Corruption Subindex improved to 3.39 in 2003 from 3.07 in 2002." In other words, the level of corruption in the Philippines decreased in 2003.

It wasn't just a case of simply misunderstanding the WEF report. The MBC's report itself emphasized that one reason the Philippine ranking in 2003 seemed to worsen was that the 2002 report included only 80 countries, while the 2003 report listed 102. Even so, the MBC noted that among the 102 countries listed in 2003, "the Philippine rank on corruption actually moved farther away from the bottom of the list (in 2003) to 10 steps from 4 steps (in 2002)."

De Quiros made even worse distortions of data when he wrote: "According to the UNDP, the human poverty index... has gotten worse, from 22 during Erap's time to 28 during GMA's time." He was referring to the rankings as reported in the UNDP's Human Development Report 2003.

The rankings were based on computed values, which were in turn derived from data on four major indicators: probability at birth of not surviving to age 40; adult literacy rate; access to clean water; and underweight children for age. All of these data were either for years 2000 or 2001, the years when Joseph Estrada's misgovernance had its impact. They do not reflect President Macapagal's governance.

De Quiros made the same distortion of data when he wrote in the same column: "HDI [Human Development Index] has fallen from 77 during Erap's time to 85 during GMA's time."

The Philippine HDI ranking of 85 was reported in the UNDP's Human Development Report 2003. Again, this ranking was based on computations of data for 2000 and 2001. The ranking, as in the human poverty index, therefore hardly reflects President Macapagal's governance. In fact, since the HDI is partly based on Gross Domestic Product data, it worsened because of the weak GDP growth during Estrada's term. (According to Winnie Monsod's calculations, annual average GDP growth under Estrada's watch was 2.9 percent, as against Ms Macapagal's 4 percent.)

That column, and I suspect most of his shrill and venomous anti-GMA columns, would seem to be classic cases of garbage-in, garbage out.

—RIGOBERTO TIGLAO,
presidential chief of staff,
Malacañang, Manila

The true last samurai

KUDOS for Rina Jimenez-David's column "Romance of war" (PDI, 1/18/04) wherein she superbly succeeded in presenting a concise but very erudite critique of the breathtaking movie: "The Last Samurai."

While it is true that Emperor Meiji decreed the abolition of the samurai class in 1871, their Code of Honor and patriotic loyalty was religiously retained and strictly continued to be adhered to by the entire population of Japan up to the second half of 1945. However, the samurai, as an entirely distinct class of warriors, was "reborn" officially in the town of Mabalacat, Pampanga at the house of the late Marcos Santos in Barangay San Francisco on the early morning of Oct. 20 1944 when Vice Adm. Ohnishi Takijiro organized the kamikaze among the 23 fighter pilots of the 201st Air Group, 1st Air Fleet, Imperial Japanese Navy. Like Katsumoto and his warriors in the movie, these "Samurais of the Sky" plunged to their deaths ferociously, believing in the nobility of the ancient Samurai Code of Honor and fierce loyalty to their emperor and country. Like Katsumoto and his warriors, they valiantly charged at their enemy, this time armed with deadly fighters and bombers laden with bombs and with full fuel tanks, to achieve maximum destruction to their well-armed and well-prepared military targets.

The resounding successes of these early sky samurais from Mabalacat immediately spurred other pilots from Clark Field, Caloocan, Manila, Cebu, Davao, Tuguegarao, Echague, Sarangani and others, to organize kamikaze squadrons. By January 1945 they moved to Taiwan, then to Japan itself. By the end of the Pacific War, the kamikaze had sunk and damaged 322 US naval vessels, killed 12,300 US sailors and brutally wounded 36,400 others. Out of 13,022 kamikazes, 4,600 died in body-crashing attacks. It was the largest suicide organization in all the annals of war history.

From this standpoint therefore, I beg to disagree with Hollywood. The true last samurai were the kamikaze pilots of World War II. The very last of them was Vice Admiral Ohnishi himself who committed *seppuku* (ritual self-disembowelment) on the night of Aug. 15, 1945—the date of Japan's surrender. David said it all when she wrote: "When the samurai wage their final stand... one's breath is taken away... by the nobility of intentions, however doomed might be the enterprise. There is after all, heroism even in defeat and even in foolhardiness..." I now look forward to the day when a grand movie will be made about the true last samurai, whose historic birthplace is Mabalacat, Pampanga, Philippines.

—DANIEL H. DIZON,
Dizon Kamikaze
Museum,
Villa Gloria,
Angeles City 2009

Embraceable candidate

ARE you one of the Philippines' many uncommitted voters, unable to choose the best among the candidates for president?

Let me help you.

There is really only one quality you should look for. Huggability.

Who is the most huggable among them?

Sino sa kanila ang pinakamasarap yakapin?

Let's start with Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. As you open your arms to hug her, someone blocks your view. *Isang mestisong mataba.* Si Jose Pidal.

Ping Lacson? *Pogi siya at mahilig lumapit sa tao. Pero, aray! aray! Masakit ang yakap. May baril sa baywang.*

Bro. Eddie Villanueva? *Naku, dahan-dahan. Huwag basta yayakap at baka may magselos. Sino? E, di si* Jesus Lord.

At si Fernando Poe Jr. *naman? Itaas ang mga braso. Ay, hindi abot! Talaga yatang maiksi ang kanyang mga braso. Pati mata niya, laging nakatago sa* sunglasses. *Dahil ba maiksi ang kanyang paningin—sa lahat ng bagay?*

Kaya kay Raul Roco *na tayo. Masarap yakapin.* Embraceable.

—EGGIE APOSTOL,
Dasmariñas Village, Makati City

Law needed to defend SSS members' interests

HONESTO GENERAL'S column "Questions of Policies" on "SSS: Biggest single money loss ever" (PDI, 3/15/04) has caught my attention. As a member of the Social Security System since 1979, I am surprised to know that the SSS has not been cautious in its investments.

A few months ago, I read in your paper that the SSS' share in Equitable-PCI Bank has caused the former huge losses. It failed to dispose the stocks at a reasonable time before its par value went very low. In the business of investment, there is a rule that stock investment should be held by an investor for so long a period of time when its value is sinking. What did the SSS do in this instance? Don't we pay their executives exorbitant amount of salaries and allowances to take care of our money and to make them grow for our benefit?

If the SSS funds will last only until 2011, as the Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP) study revealed, surely enough, many of its members who will be expecting to get their pensions a few years later will end up waiting for nothing. They have contributed their hard-earned money anticipating to get them back with corresponding dividends when they retire.

I thereby appeal to our legislative body to make laws that will safeguard the funds of the SSS on behalf of the 25 million members. Why not pass a law lowering the retirement age of a member to 50 years old or after 25 years of contribution to the system? This way, the retirees can still afford to enjoy the fruits of their compulsory contributions.

—ROSE M. LALUSIN,
Lipa City

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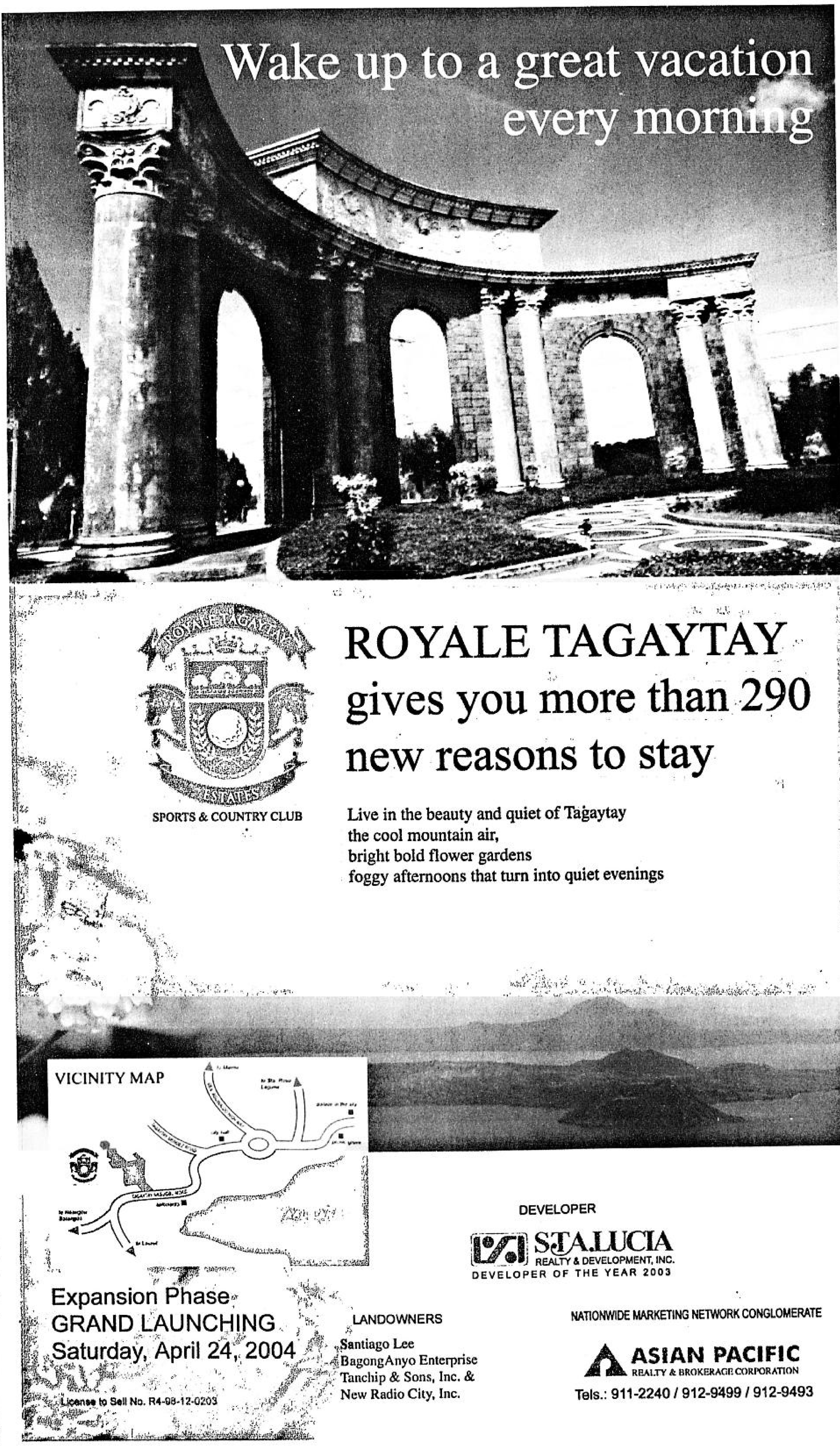

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Cavite politicians vow peaceful polls

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

IMUS, Cavite—Despite the divisions hounding them now, supporters and allies of presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson in Cavite yesterday slammed reports that said they were considering leaving their provincemate's candidacy even as they vowed for peaceful and honest elections.

Both camps of feuding Gov. Ireneo "Ayong" Maliksi and the Remulla clan also denied reports that they were preparing their armed men and private armies as they anticipate a bloody election.

Rep. Gilbert Remulla of the second district said their family and supporters never thought of withdrawing their support for Lacson after the senator's alleged failure to convince Maliksi not to support the rival candidate of his brother, lawyer Crispin "Boying" Remulla.

Maliksi, the Magdalo Party's gubernatorial candidate, dropped Crispin, the party's official candidate, in the congressional race of the third district in favor of Silang Mayor Ruben Madlangsacay.

He said the row between their family and Maliksi could have been averted if only Lacson met with the governor before he came out in public and announced he was supporting Madlangsacay.

"I told Senator Lacson about the matter two weeks before Maliksi came out in public. (After he had spoken with Maliksi), he told me that the governor denied that he was dropping Boying in the third district," Remulla told the INQUIRER.

"But despite what happened, we never said we're withdrawing our support for Senator Lacson and Maliksi. He is still our candidate," he added.

Remulla, however, admitted that Maliksi's decision to back Madlangsacay "could create confusion" among their local candidates and supporters.

"All politics is local. By supporting a rival candidate, it is possible for Maliksi to help Madlangsacay in asking support from a rival camp (because) we are already with Lacson. That's where the confusion starts," he explained.

"Obviously, Maliksi's move could affect Lacson's chances for the presidency. If he really wants a united Caviteños for Lacson, why is he doing this?"

Earlier, Maliksi said the issue between him and the Remullas would not affect Lacson's candidacy as "the issue was too local."

"Lacson has nothing to do with my decision to withdraw my support for Boying. This was a personal decision," Maliksi said, as he admitted that he supported his party mate's opponent without the approval of Magdalo.

Remulla also brushed off speculations that they were preparing their private armies. He also denied allegations that they were keeping goons and "hired guns."

Ship stranded to give way to bomb search

DUMAGUETE CITY—An inter-island vessel of the Negros Navigation bound for Iloilo City with over 600 passengers on board was stranded in this city's port on Wednesday because of a bomb threat.

Skipper Henry Ledesma of the MV Sao Paolo, which came from Iligan City, decided to make an emergency docking at the Dumaguete Port after receiving a radio message from the Iligan Coast Guard stating that a passenger of the vessel was bringing a package with a bomb inside.

Bomb experts from the police, together with personnel from the Maritime police, Coast Guard and the Philippine Ports Authority scoured MV Sao Paolo for six hours but found no bomb in the vessel, according to SPO4 Enriqueto Zendon, deputy station commander of the Maritime police here.

MV Sao Paolo departed from Iligan Port at around 6 p.m. Tuesday. At around 9 p.m., while the vessel was cruising in the vicinity of Serino Island in the Mindanao Sea, Ledesma received the message from the Philippine Coast Guard in Iligan, which attributed the information to Iligan City Mayor Franklin Quijano.

Ledesma then radioed the Coast Guard in Dumaguete, the nearest port, for assistance. MV Sao Paolo docked at the Dumaguete Port at around 12:20 a.m. of Wednesday.

Zendon said Ledesma then calmly announced to the passengers the threat and told them not to panic and to disembark from the vessel calmly but quickly. The passengers were brought to the passengers' shed of the port here while the authorities inspected the vessel.

Zendon said the joint team inspected all the baggage in the vessel for five hours but found no bomb. Sao Paolo left the port of Dumaguete for Iloilo at around 5 a.m.

Security had been tightened at ports following the burning of a Super Ferry ship that was attributed to terrorism after Abu Sayyaf bandit leaders claimed responsibility for the ship fire.

Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Yet another bet held by rebels

BUTUAN CITY—About 40 heavily armed communist rebels briefly held a mayoral candidate and his entire slate while on their way to campaign in a rebel-controlled village in Loreto, Agusan del Sur on Wednesday morning.

The hostage-taking took place barely a week after the rebels held hostage, then later released, a reelectionist mayor in Surigao del Sur.

Chief Supt. Alberto Olario, Caraga police chief, told the INQUIRER that Loreto mayoral aspirant Romeo Magadan and his party had finished campaigning in Kauswagan Village and were on their way to Sitio Cabuga in Barangay Sta. Teresa when the rebels blocked their way around 10:15 a.m.

The rebels have been demanding permit-to-campaign fees from Magadan, the administration candidate in Loreto town, but the candidate has not paid a single centavo, according to Olario.

Olario said Magadan, incumbent Mayor Hermenio Reyes, who is running for vice mayor and candidates for councilor Esmeraldo Alvarez Sr., Amado Lozado Jr., Arbentino Patio, Virgilio Hulao, William Go, Remy Angela, Rolando Eresare and Marily Jaday, were later released after they handed the firearms of their security escorts to the rebels.

"The rebels (got the firearms) because they could not pay (the) PTC, and released them," Olario said.

He said the rebels, led by a certain Ka Dolfo Sanggod, fled with the security escorts' three M-16 rifles, an Ingram, a .45 pistol and one shotgun.

Olario said Magadan's group continued with their campaign after the hostage-taking.

The guerrillas earlier held hostage the mayor of Jiabong town in Samar.

The mayor was released after P200,000 were paid to the rebels as permit-to-campaign fee.

The guerrillas' detractors had condemned what they said was the NPA's extortion from politicians. *Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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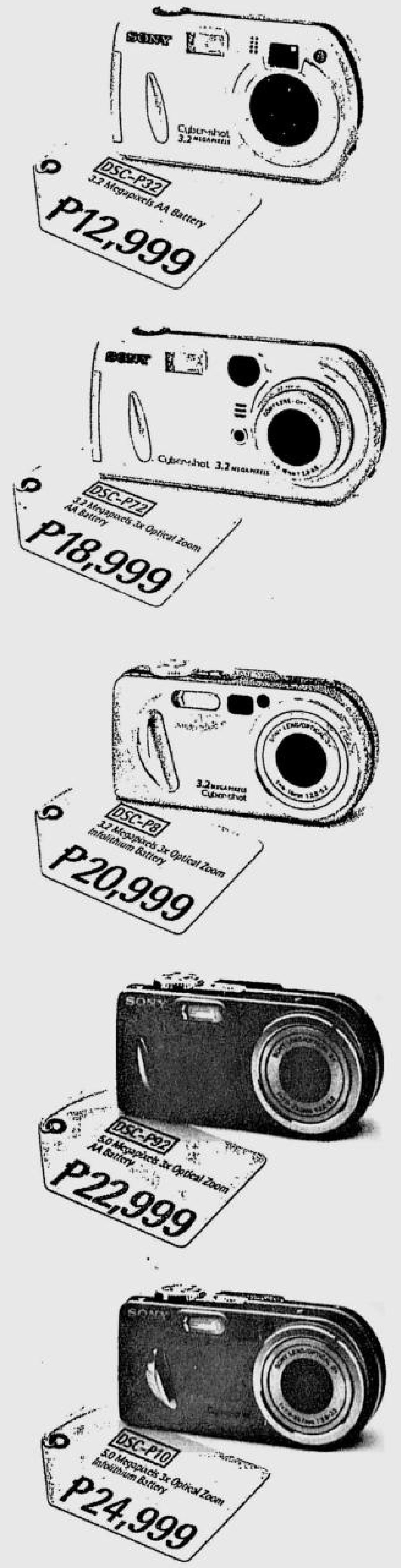
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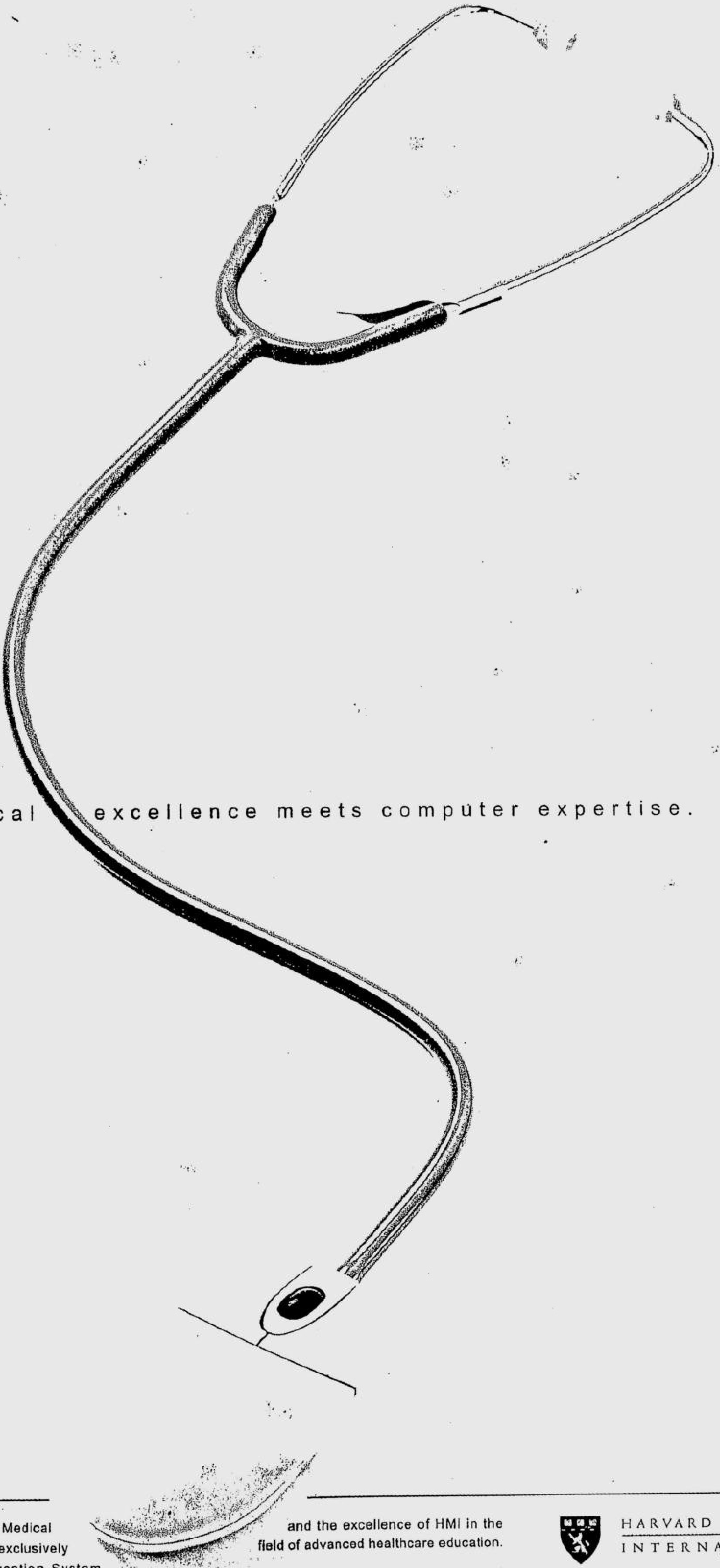
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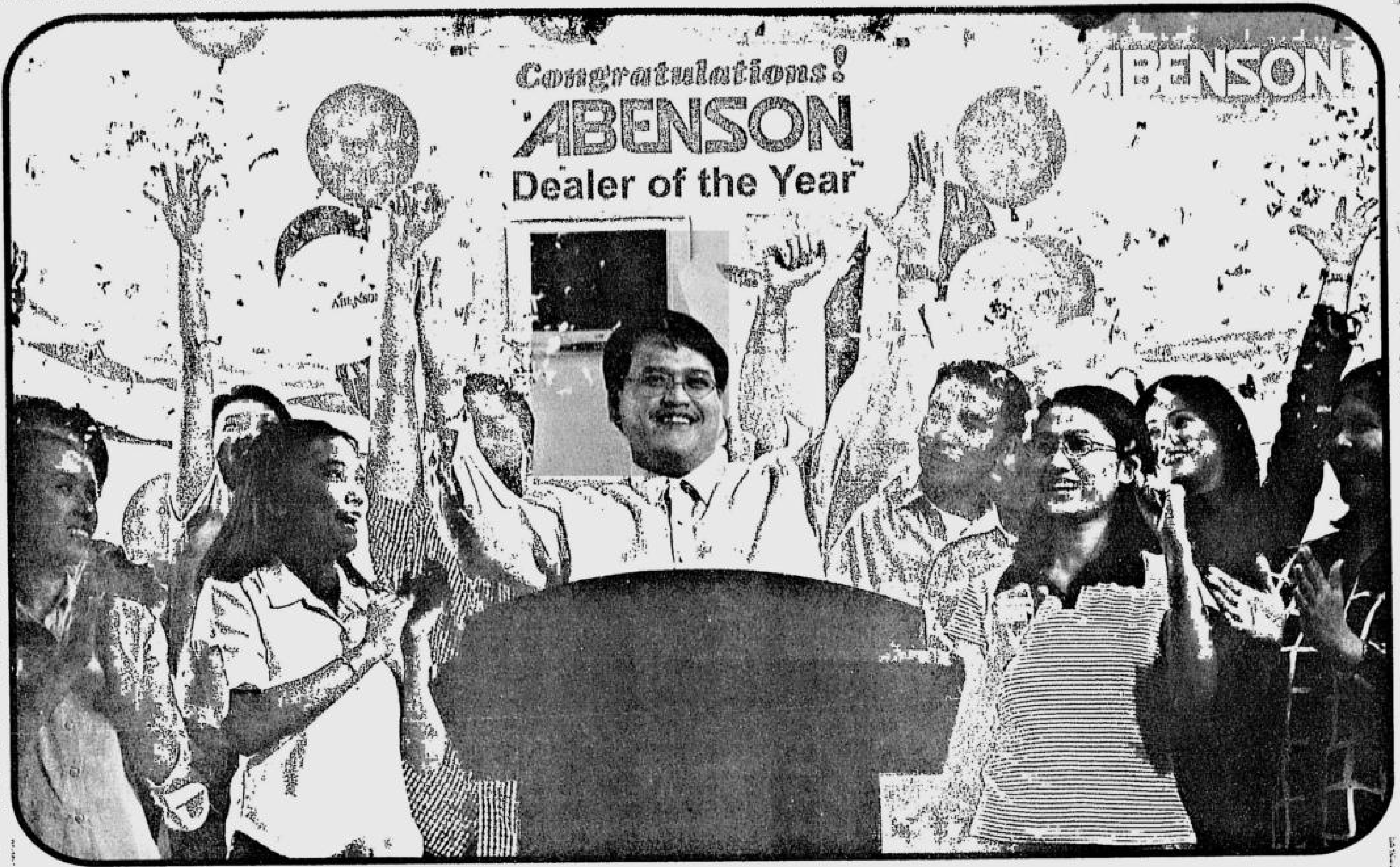

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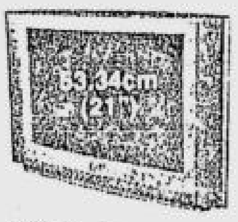
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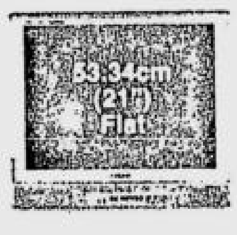
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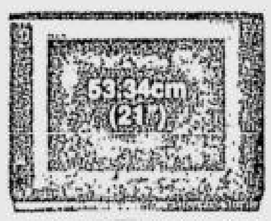
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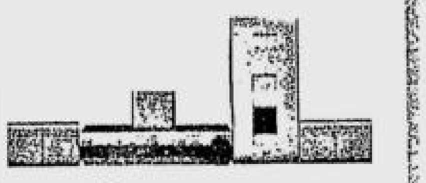
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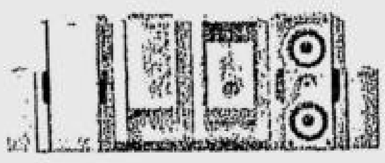
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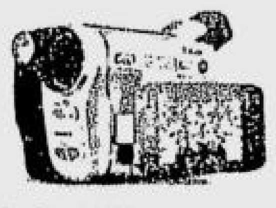
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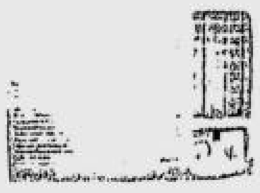
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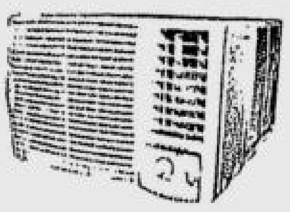
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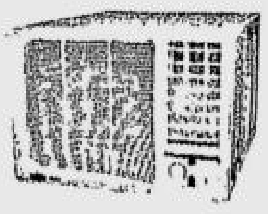
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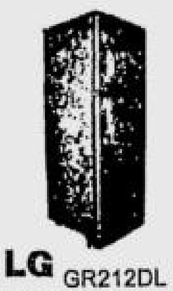
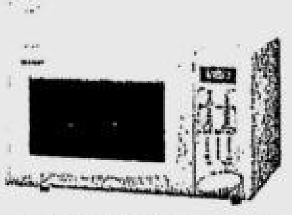
₱ 14,372

SAMSUNG RA20VGSS
6.0 cuft single-door
with thru-door water dispenser
₱ 10,495


LG GR212DL
7.0 cuft capacity
Two-Door, No-Frost
Multi Air Flow
₱ 11,995

SHARP ES450W
4.5 kgs dry load capacity
single tub
₱ 2,498


SHARP R220F
23 liter oven capacity
800watts
light-up dial
₱ 3,998

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Makati - Quad 1 816-3991/816-8453, Waltermart Pasong Tamo, 813-4444/894-3730 • **Mandaluyong** 631-5188/631-8161 Shangri-la Plaza 636-8017 to 19 St. Francis Square 633-1362 • **Manila** - Robinsons - Ermita 536-8029/536-7914 Harrison Plaza 521-8588/69 • **Marikina** Riverbanks Mall 941-5003 • **Muntinlupa** - Metropolis 809-8172/74 Alabang 850-8848 to 50 Filinvest Festival Mall 850-3775/79 • **Pasay** - Metropoint Taft Ave. 833-7829 • **Parañaque** - Pearl Plaza, Tambo 851-8401 to 05 Sucat – Jaka 829-2686/88 • **Pasig** - Ortigas - Ever 656-6643 to 47 • **Quezon City** - Waltermart E. Rodriguez 724-2528 SM City Carpark 920-9151 to 53 Robinsons Galleria 632-9101 to 05 Center Mall Fairview 937-5911 Rustan's 911-2312/13 Commonwealth 951-8976 Circle C Mall Congressional Ave. 927-9432 Farmers 911-1071 EastWood City Libis 687-1776/6872373 • **Las Piñas** - Pamplona 872-0576/77 • **San Juan** - Greenhills – Missouri 722-1261 or 64 • **Malabon** - Malabon Citisquare 285-9727 • **Kalookan** - Grand Central 363-5246/363-5338 • **Tayuman** - Puregold Pricemart 252-5787 • **Rizal** - Sta. Lucia 1 – Cainta 645-0402/04 Sta. Lucia 3 - Cainta 681-5301 • **Bulacan** - Meycauayan (044)228-2117 Valenzuela Pure Gold 277-9538/39 • **Cabanatuan** - NE Pacific Mall Nueva Ecija (044) 464-1481 to 84 • **Cavite** - Carmona (046) 430-2703/520-8063 Gen. Trias (046) 419-1750 Rosario (046) 6752448/49 Waltermart Dasmariñas (046) 416-2104 Lotus – Imus (046) 515-5749 Robinsons – Imus (046) 471-8020 or 30 • **Laguna** - Olivares Mall Biñan (049) 699-2316 Pavilion Mall, Biñan (049) 411-4510/11 Waltermart Calamba (049) 545-7035 Waltermart Sta. Rosa (049) 549-1220 San Pablo (049) 562-8242 • **Pampanga** - Nepomall, Angeles City (045) 888-9086 Dau Pure Gold (045) 892-4768/892-4295 • **Quezon** Pacific Mall Lucena (042) 373-0443 • **Batangas** Fiesta World Mall Lipa City (043) 4041661 Bay City Mall Batangas City (043) 7236790/7230934

Abenson, having first opened its doors in 1970, now caters to millions of Filipino households for their appliance needs. To date, it has become the largest retail network with over 65 branches nationwide making Abenson the most conducive and convenient appliance retail outfit in the country.

Abenson's continued success is in lieu of the long-standing trust and loyalty of the Filipino market for several reasons. One, the company develops itself to better cater to its particular customer needs and expectations. Urban stores have lifestyle displays showcasing high technology Plasma TV's and state-of-the-art home theaters. Two, Abenson sells only branded appliances. Products sold in store are pre-selected for quality: only well-established brands are displayed in an Abenson store floor. This stamp of quality assures you of full manufacturer's warranty and a wide service network. Third, Abenson upgrades its technology to give you fast service time and ease in appliance shopping. Lastly, value-added services like Extended Warranty, Door-to-Door delivery and flexible payment schemes are offered to customers to give them utmost convenience.

Abenson keeps strong relationships with its list of suppliers in order to provide Filipinos better choices when it comes to their home appliances needs. Working together with world-class brands, Abenson believes that customers win by having the best appliance deals. With this in place, Abenson has become Filipinos' trusted appliance shop– getting the widest variety of brands with the highest quality performance and workmanship.

This year, Abenson has been given the highest distinction by the following brands: SONY, SHARP, LG, SAMSUNG, CONDURA, KELVINATOR, PHILIPS, and CARRIER as their 2003 "Dealer of the Year" and "Most Preferred Dealer". As the brands' Dealer of the Year, Abenson achieved the highest sales compared with other appliance retailers. This signals that Abenson is, in fact, the choice of many Filipinos. It shows that Abenson's stronger relationship with appliance manufacturers assures customers of the best value appliance deals.

With this achievement, Abenson embraces this event as another opportunity in further providing Filipinos the best bargains in the market.

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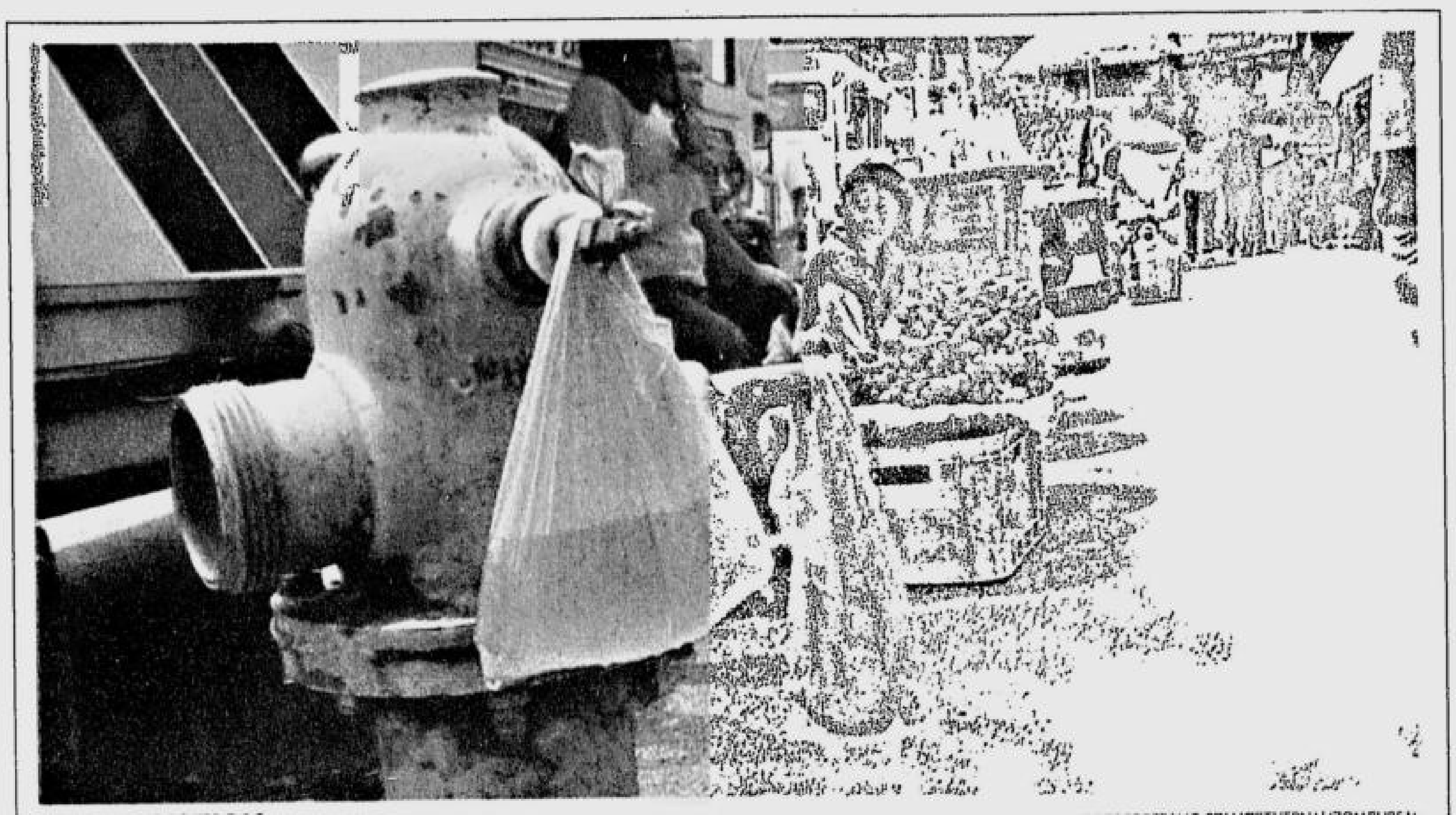

TOOTS SOBERANO PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

CONSERVATION
Wonder what this plastic bag is doing on a fire hydrant on Governor Pack Street in Baguio City? The hydrant was leaking water and an unidentified concerned citizen thought of putting the plastic to reduce the leak.

14 more W. Visayas areas tagged election 'hot spots'

ILOILO CITY—Fourteen more election hot spots were identified in Western Visayas as the May 10 elections nears.

The newly identified areas of concern (AOCs) brought the total number of AOCs in the region to 39, the Philippine National Police here said.

A locality is considered an AOC if it has a history of election-related violence, presence of rebels and the existence of intense political rivalry.

Iloilo province has the most AOCs with 21.

These are Passi City and the towns of Alimodian, Anilao, Balasan, Barotac Viejo, Bingawan, Calinog, Duenas, Igbaras, Janiuay, Lambunao, Leganes, Lemery, Leon, Maasin, Miag-ao, San Dionisio, San Enrique, San Joaquin, San Rafael and Tubungan.

Negros Occidental has seven—the towns of Calatrava, Himamaylan and Moises Padilla, and the cities of Cadiz, Escalante, Sagay and Silay.

Antique has five AOCs—the towns of Bugasong, Culasi, Lawaan, San Remigio, and Valderama. Capiz has three—Roxas City and the towns of Cuartero and Dumarao.

Libacao town was the sole AOC in Aklan while there was none for the island-province of Guimaras and Bacolod City.

Iloilo City was considered an AOC with 10 of its villages, mostly in the waterfront area, under close police watch. The barangays include Zamora-Melliza, City Proper, West Habog-Habog Monica, Gen Hughes, Legaspi de la Rama, Muelle Loney, Sto. Rosario-Duran, Yulo-Arroyo, Veterans Village and Tanza-Bonifacio.

Lawyer Victor Gaborne, regional elections supervisor, said the increasing number of hot spots is "no cause for alarm."

Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau

Rescue of farms from drought starts

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—At least 145 mobile water pumps have been prepared to rescue at least 1,578 hectares of riceland in eastern Pampanga and Bulacan from the prolonged dry spell, an agriculture official said on Tuesday.

Each pump, fitted with four-inch wide pipes and which could draw water from open surfaces like canals and brooks, could irrigate at least three hectares daily, said Eduardo Gonzales, assistant director of the Department of Agriculture in Central Luzon.

"Farmers can now borrow (the pumps). They don't have to pay anything. They just have to shoulder the cost of the fuel," Gonzales said.

He said the emergency plan of the DA and the National Irrigation Administration, came after officials of the Angat-Maasin Reservoir Irrigation System (Amris) decided to shut off the "hilltop" or the dam's main water source since last week.

Farmers in the neighboring towns of Candaba in Pampanga and San Miguel in Bulacan relied on the Bustos and Longos rivers for irrigation.

Gonzales said some 800 hectares of riceland in those two towns are almost parched. The crops are just in their vegetative stage and needed to be irrigated before the wet season starts next month.

If the standing crops in the 1,578 hectares are damaged, he said, the region stands to lose about 157,800 cavans of rice.

But 85 percent of the palay ready for harvesting in 13,000 hectares in the towns at the tailend of the Angat Dam—Malolos, Calumpit and Hagonoy in Bulacan and San Simon in Pampanga—still have enough water and show strong chances of surviving the water shortage, he said.

Gonzales said Nueva Ecija, the region's biggest rice-producing province, is not affected by water shortage and is, in fact, in the peak of harvest.

Agriculturists plan to start the early cropping of hybrid rice varieties in 27,000 hectares in Nueva Ecija because the major irrigation water source in the province, the Pantabangan Dam, remains at a normal level.

New seed varieties are going to be used to increase the yield and offset whatever losses the dry spell would cause to the agricultural sector in Central Luzon, Gonzales said.

"There is a strong need to find alternative sources of irrigation," he said.

He noted the competition between some 8,000 farmers who used the Angat Dam water for agricultural production and Metro Manila's 10 million residents who rely on Angat for domestic water supply. This competition, he said, heightens during the dry season. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Lakas execs say no need to cheat

By Raj Padilla
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Two officials of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrat in Iloilo dismissed as "groundless" the claim of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) that Iloilo City and province were among the places where the administration would employ fraud to bolster President Macapagal-Arroyo's chances of winning in the May 10 elections.

Iloilo Rep. Arthur Defensor, Lakas-CMD provincial chair, said President Macapagal would win in the city and province because she has a strong organization here and not because of any unlawful means.

"The opposition is whistling in the dark. They are being intimidated by their own shadows. As it has always been, elections in Iloilo will be peaceful and orderly except probably for a few isolated incidents," he told the INQUIRER.

Defensor was reacting to the statement made by Sen. Vicente Sotto III, KNP campaign manager, over ABS-CBN on Monday that "*dagdag-bawas* (vote-padding and shaving) would occur in Iloilo."

"The record of Iloilo in vote-padding and vote-shaving is bad. It should be watched closely," Sotto said over ABS-CBN.

He also named other places in the country where they believed the administration would commit fraud.

Defensor said they do not have to cheat because President Macapagal-Arroyo "will definitely win in Iloilo with a huge margin."

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas scored Sotto for his "irresponsible" statement.

"We're no cheats. Besides, there's no need for any hanky-panky. Our own surveys show that President Arroyo is leading Mr. Poe by a mile and she'll win big in Iloilo City," said Treñas, Lakas-CMD chair in the city. Treñas said the Ilonggo voters are "intelligent."

Iloilo City and province are known bailiwicks of the administration. Senate President Franklin Drilon, an Ilonggo, even declared the city and province as "PGMA Country."

In Iloilo province, two gubernatorial candidates—incumbent Niel Tupas of the Liberal Party and Iloilo Rep. Oscar Garin of Lakas-CMD—are both rooting for President Macapagal.

16 Negros sugar industry labor groups back GMA

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

VAL HANDUMON/PDI PHOTO

PRESIDENT Macapagal, basking on her colors during a campaign in San Pedro, Laguna, draws the support of workers in the sugar industry for her pro-sugar industry policies.

BACOLOD CITY—Sixteen labor organizations in Negros Occidental composed mainly of sugar workers and farmers signed a manifesto of support for the presidential bid of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The groups said the Macapagal administration has posted achievements that proved to be very beneficial for the interest and protection of the workers and dependents of the sugar industry.

They cited the President for the release of the sugar Agriculture Competitiveness Enhancement Fund amounting to P600 million that benefited the mill districts; the transfer of raw and refined sugar from the temporary exclusion list to sensitive list of the Asean Free Trade Agreement; and for issuing Executive Order 230 to effect a preferential rate of 48 percent for sugar products.

They also said the President's administration was responsible for the upward adjustment of the final bound tariff on sugar from 50 percent to 80 percent; intervention of the National Food Authority in the stabilization of domestic prices; and the reclassification of all products containing 65-percent sugar or premixes.

They also hailed the appointment of Secretary Angelo Reyes as the anti-smuggling czar.

The signatories to the manifesto were Bernardo Remo, national president of the United Sugar Farmers Organization and Allied Services-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP); Zoilo de la Cruz Jr., president of the National Congress of Unions in the Sugar Industry of the Philippines (Nacusip-TUCP); Arturo Ronquillo, national president of the Workers Amalgamated Union of the Philippines; Randy Ronquillo, national president of the Trade Union of Filipino Workers; Jun de la Cruz, national coordinator of the Congress of Independent Organizations-Associated Labor Union.

Ronald Esponilla, national executive vice president of the Philippine Agricultural, Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union (Paciwu)-TUCP; Editha Caceres, deputy secretary of the Fraternal Labor Organization-ALU; Alberto Tibus, president of the Paciwu Riverside Medical Center; Luciano Ilon, president of the Association of Negros Coop. Inc.; Marcelo Villones, chair of the Negros Occidental Sugar Workers Foundation Inc.; Alan Vinas, president of G.V. and Sons Workers Union; Noel Villarin, president of the Nacusip Hacienda San Vicente de Fuego II; Reynald Nocer, president of Nacusip Hacienda Calbaryo; Loi Montebano, president of Nacusip Hacienda Dalinson; Nonito Duran, president of the Paciwu Orient Marine Fishing Resources Inc. and Fortunato Salado, president of the CIO-ALU CCBPI Sales Force Union.

Ibalois seek positions to protect their rights

BAGUIO CITY—Ibalois in the city convened for the first time in 95 years on Wednesday their council of elders to try to get five Ibaloi candidates into office.

Aspulan (Ibaloi for huddling place) formed its first contemporary group of elders since the American colonial government displaced their ancestors from the pastureland called *Kafagway* to build the summer capital in 1909.

The elders said no Ibaloi politician has been elected into office in Baguio in the last 50 years, and they believe this is the reason the city government disregards their rights over their ancestral land claims in Baguio.

The administration of incumbent Mayor Bernardo Vergara considers most ancestral land claims in Baguio as void because of a provision in the 1997 Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (Ipra) that excludes Baguio from ancestral land deliberations.

Aspulan has been protesting Baguio's exclusion since 1995, pointing out that the heirs of Ibaloi herdsman Mateo Cariño have a stake in ancestral lands here.

Cariño won a 1909 ruling from the United States Supreme Court that granted him rights over land being staked by the American colonial government. This ruling is known in Philippine jurisprudence as the Cariño Doctrine, and is the foundation for Ipra.

The Court of Appeals had ruled that Vergara must submit to the quasi-judicial authority of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in connection with a demolition order he issued against an Ibaloi house standing on an ancestral land claim.

Vergara had sought to overturn an NCIP restraining order on his March 7, 2003 directive to demolish the house of Judith Cariño.

The Ibalois' land claims were also put on the spot by the existence of 600 supposedly spurious land titles that were produced by the NCIP days before the ouster of former President Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Ibalois need to find their voice in government, said Ruby Giron, chair of the Mateo and Bayosa Cariño Foundation and an Aspulan founder.

She said the Ibalois' reputation for being "timid" had victimized the indigenous group for decades. "There is an Ibaloi boy who was accused of being an *akyat buhay* (burglar). It is in those instances when we should fight for Ibaloi rights," she said.

But Giron said *Aspulan*'s chief function is to organize the transfer of indigenous knowledge from the remaining Ibaloi elders to their children and grandchildren. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Bus catches fire

ILAGAN, Isabela—A bus burst into flames after it suffered from an electrical short circuit in Cabagan town on Friday night, police said. Supt. Agripino Lopez, Isabela police intelligence and investigation chief, said no one among the 18 passengers of the Auto Bus was hurt. He said the fire was aggravated by a fuel leak.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Smuggle try foiled

OLONGAPO CITY—Police on April 15 foiled an attempt to smuggle out of the Subic Bay freeport 10 boxes of stale cigarettes. Senior Insp. David Vinluan, commander of Station 5 here, said the expired Marlboro cigarettes were found inside a green Nissan Vanette, owned by the Metro Manila-based Goldlynk Steamship Inc. Vinluan said they confiscated the cigarettes in a police checkpoint here after the van's driver, Apolinario Montero, failed to present any permit.

Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Wildlife center opened

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Officials of the Wildlife in Need (Win) Foundation and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority launched the Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Center (ARRC) here recently to protect, preserve and develop the wildlife and forest land inside this former American naval base. Representatives of the Win Foundation, a nonprofit organization formed by the founders of Ocean Adventure, signed a memorandum of agreement with the SBMA to establish the rescue center to care for sick, injured and confiscated wild animals here. The foundation will occupy a 1,598-square meter property at the naval magazine area here for the establishment of the ARRC

Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Man kills child

SAN ANTONIO, Quezon—A 6-year-old child was accidentally killed by his own father in Barangay Matipunso on Wednesday during a heated argument with the victim's mother. Police identified the victim as Ronald Mendez, a village day-care student. Investigation disclosed that the suspect, Romeo, and his wife, Eufrocina, were having an argument that turned into a fight inside their house. The suspect grabbed a lead pipe and struck his partner with a blow but unfortunately it was the kid who was fatally hit in the head. The boy died while being treated in a Lipa City Hospital. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

41 jueteng men nabbed

LUCENA CITY—Police arrested at least 41 suspected illegal gambling employees in raids in the towns of Gumaca, Lopez and Tiaong and in this city in Quezon province since Friday. Senior Supt Leo Kison, provincial police chief, said the arrested suspects yielded P7,137 in bets and several jueteng paraphernalia. A police intelligence report said jueteng operators that run "kangaroo style" have been trying to lure easy money as campaign funds for reelectionist incumbent officials. But the relentless police campaign against the resurgence of the illegal numbers game prevented them from doing so, Kison said

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

KNP team survives mishap

NAGA CITY—A media officer of the Kilusan ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino and her driver survived a car accident in Barangay Cumaday-Caday, Del Gallego, Camarines Sur at about 4:30 a.m., yesterday while on their way to Naga City from Manila. Jen Corpuz said driver Philip Bolinao suddenly swerved their vehicle, a Toyota Hi-Ace commuter van, to the right when he allegedly saw a woman crossing the Quirino Highway. The vehicle turned turtle twice as it fell into a four-meter ravine, Corpuz added. The victims suffered only contusions as their seat belts were fastened. Corpuz said she learned later that the spot where the accident happened was near the place where the late movie actress Halina Perez died when the Toyota Revo she and seven others were riding collided with an Isuzu trailer truck on March 5

Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Ancestral lands given

CALAPAN CITY—National Council of Indigenous People Commissioner Lagtum Pasag, the first Mangyan NCIP commissioner, said here that the NCIP has awarded certificates of ancestral domain titles in Romblon, Kabankalan City in Negros, Iraya in Occidental Mindoro, and Coron, Palawan, including ancestral waters. Some 5,700 hectares of ancestral land in Oriental Mindoro are expected to be approved before April ends, he said

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Filipino political families 'an octopus'

From page A1

"A governor runs to the end of his legal term, after which the wife or son runs to finish a term. Then the old governor comes back, while the wife or son seeks another office, perhaps accompanied by a sibling who's running in another area. And so on and so forth until the family's tentacles are all over the place," said Abad.

According to the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism's study of Philippine legislatures, "The Rule Makers: How the Wealthy and Well-born Dominate Congress," four out of 10 representatives in all post-Marcos Congresses have been relatives of previous legislators.

In the 11th Congress of 1998, after three-term members bowed out, six in every 10 of 130 House legislators were members of political clans. Only 42 percent were not from political families, the PCIJ said.

Some political families have been around for at least a century, having begun in politics in the early years of the 20th century when the United States colonial government first introduced elections here.

But the 1907 Philippine Assembly, the country's first elected legislature, set the template for the next hundred years by limiting suffrage to the educated and the propertied, ensuring that elite families would dominate public office for decades to come.

Most durable

The Aquino-Cojuangco clan of Tarlac, the most durable of these dynasties, has been in power for four generations. The martyred Benigno S. Aquino's grandfather was a general of the revolutionary army and a member of the Malolos Congress of 1898. Former President Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino's grandfather served in the first Philippine Assembly of 1907.

Others, like the family of Danao City warlord Ramon S. Durano Sr., go back even further to the Spanish colonial era, during which members of the native elite occupied the lower rungs of the colonial bureaucracy.

Not all political dynasties were founded on the traditional sources of wealth and power, like large landholdings as in Negros and violence as in Ilocos Sur and Cavite.

Stellar careers, businesses

The Enriles, Rocos and Angaras have parlayed stellar careers in the law into public office and dynasty-building. Family business interests are also a strong impetus to win elective positions as in the case of the fishing-based Sandoval family of Malabon-Navotas and Palawan.

Nor are dynasties so entrenched that they live forever. The once powerful "sugar bloc" political families of Western Visayas are being replaced by younger, more dynamic clans, many of them like the Garins of Iloilo deriving their influence from having built successful business enterprises.

Some dynasties have become so huge and powerful they cannot contain the ambitions of all their individual members and have split up into competing factions such as the Duranos of Danao City.

Abad considers political clans to be "the root of our political immaturity" and the reason why inequalities persist in Philippine society.

Being thoroughly exploitive, political clans use the privileges and resources of public office to perpetuate themselves in power.

Inimical to strong party system

They build coalitions and networks of supporters loyal only to them to be mobilized during elections. The clan candidate has no need for party networks as the family or clan is his or her party organization. This has been inimical to the development of a strong party system, said Abad.

Descendants inherit the family's political base, machinery and money, thus ensuring the clans' monopoly of power.

"In a system where wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, it is easy for the elite to manipulate power to satisfy private ends," Abad said.

The 1987 Constitution tried to promote equal opportunity for public office by prohibiting political dynasties. But Congress, controlled by the political families, has not legislated the enabling law to implement the Constitution's provisions against political dynasties.

Northern Luzon: 12 Ortegas running in May elections

From page A1

with 10 members contesting and the Dys of Isabela, with six, are not far behind.

Other dominant dynasts in the region are the Marcoses of Ilocos Norte, the Agbayanis of Pangasinan, the Valeras of Abra and the Buluts of Apayao.

La Union

The Ortega clan of La Union is probably the most formidable of the political families of Northern Luzon, its ascendance having started in 1901 when the patriarch, Joaquin Ortega Sr., was appointed by the Taft Commission as the first civilian governor of the province. Ortega, a Spanish mestizo born in Cebu, became the first elected governor of La Union in 1902.

In August 2001, the family observed it's 100th year of public service. On that occasion, La Union Bishop Antonio Tobias said the celebration was "not for the Ortegas remaining in power for 100 years and beyond. It is for all of us ... to see to it that part of leadership is training others to succeed capably or even better."

Ortega fathered 14 children, 10 of whom would serve La Union either as governors or representatives or would marry spouses who would serve in the military and the judiciary.

. From Ortega's 14 children would descend about 30 relatives from the second to the fourth generation who would become governors, congressmen, mayors, vice mayors, councilors and village heads of La Union towns and capital city.

His two sons, Francisco (Pacoy) and Joaquin, dominated La Union's politics from the 1920s to the 1960s.

On May 10, at least 12 3rd- and 4th-generation Ortegas and their relatives are running for different local posts.

Leading the clan is Gov. Victor Ortega and his brother, 1st district Rep. Manuel Ortega, who are both running for reelection.

Mary Jane Ortega, Victor's wife, is running for her third and final term as mayor of the capital, San Fernando City.

Jonathan Orros, son of former Gov. Justo Ortega Orros Jr., is running for a second term as provincial board member. Jose Ortega, a brother of Victor and Manuel, is also running for board member.

Five Ortega clan members are running for election into the 12-member San Fernando city council: Mario Lacsamana; Emmanuel Ortega, son of Manuel; Francisco "Kit" Ortega Jr., another brother of Victor and Manuel; John Orros, and board member Pablo Ortega.

Vice Gov. Augusto Aureo Nisce, an Ortega in-law, is running for reelection. His brother, Pancrasio, is running for councilor of San Fernando.

The Dumpit family is another prominent La Union clan.

Rep. Tomas Dumpit is running for reelection in the second district. His son, Thomas "Butch" Dumpit, is challenging Governor Ortega's reelection bid.

Representative Dumpit's daughter, Ma. Theresa Dumpit-Michelena, is running for mayor of Agoo town. The Commission on Elections has disqualified Dumpit-Michelena on residency grounds but the case is on appeal.

Ilocos Sur

The Singson clan has 10 members running for various posts in its quest for continued dominance of Ilocos Sur politics.

Former Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, the clan patriarch, is attempting to regain his old post. He is being challenged by his relentless critics, former board member Efren Rafanan and Save Ilocos Sur Alliance chair Estelita Cordero.

Singson's second cousin, Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson, is running for reelection in the second district.

The family's dominance of Ilocos Sur politics began in 1971 when Chavit and older brother Evaristo "Titong" won as governor and Vigan mayor, respectively, defeating Carmeling and Bingbong Crisologo, their aunt and cousin.

Carmeling's husband, Floro Crisologo, the province's political kingpin, was killed the year before while hearing Mass in the Vigan cathedral.

Signs that the second generation is poised to take over are emerging in this year's election.

Chavit's son, Ronald, is running for reelection as provincial board member while Eric's son, Allen, is running for mayor of Candon.

Chavit's brother, Ilocos Sur Vice Gov. Jeremias Singson, is running for board member while their sister, Germalina Goulhart, is running for reelection as Vigan city councilor.

Ferdinand Medina, the husband of Chavit's niece, Vigan Mayor Eva Marie Medina, is running for mayor of Vigan.

Eric's brother, Alfonso, is running for reelection as Candon councilor.

Eric's brother-in-law, board member Edgardo Zaragoza, is running for mayor of Narvacan while a son, Zuriel Zaragoza, is running for board member.

Ilocos Norte

The Marcos family is perhaps the only surviving political dynasty in Ilocos Norte. Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and Rep. Imee Marcos, the children of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, will be serving out their final terms if they win in May.

The Marcos siblings have no known opponents after Laoag Mayor Roger Fariñas backed out of the gubernatorial race two weeks after announcing that he would challenge Ferdinand Jr.

VAL HANDUMON

NORTHERN Luzon political kingpins—Chavit Singson, Ilocos Norte Gov. Bongbong Marcos and Rep. Roque Ablan—keep the President company during her campaign in Laoag, Ilocos Norte on Thursday.

The siblings will be ineligible for reelection in 2007 and may well leave provincial politics to run for national office.

Already, other Marcos relatives are either occupying or have started making their way into minor provincial positions.

Marcos cousins, former Gintong Alay founder Michael Marcos-Keon and Mariano Marcos II, are both running under the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan as provincial board members.

Keon and Marcos II are political neophytes compared to another cousin, reelectionist board member Angelo Marcos-Barba, who is a former mayor of San Nicolas town.

Keon has been active in the provincial government's sports program since 1998, when he was hired as a sports consultant to supervise and train young athletes.

Marcos II is a businessman who set up a ground handling company at the Currimao seaport.

Other Ilocos Norte families have developed their own dynasties.

The Fariñas family, whose stronghold is Laoag, wields considerable influence on Ilocos politics.

Michael Fariñas, president of the Association of Barangay Captains (ABC), is following the trail of Mayor Fariñas, his uncle, who similarly started his climb to the mayoral post as ABC president.

Michael is running for mayor against Laoag Vice Mayor Eddie Domingo, who claims a strong mass base and is counting on the support of the Marcoses.

The politically divided Naluptas of Batac, the Marcoses' hometown, are laying the groundwork for a dynasty.

The Nalupta clan, led by estranged brothers Batac Mayor Jesus Nalupta Sr. and former Vice Gov. Mariano Nalupta Jr., has a string of family members occupying various local posts, from the Sanggunian Kabataan to the barangay to town councils.

Pangasinan

Aguedo Agbayani, who died in October 2003, served Pangasinan as congressman and governor for 30 years, his apparently untainted rule earning him the title of "grand old man of Pangasinan politics."

Three of his children are running for various positions in May: Gov. Victor Agbayani for reelection; his older brother, outgoing Sual Mayor Luis Agbayani, for representative of the first district; and their sister, singer Teresita Victoria, for mayor of Sual.

Will the Agbayani children prove worthy of their father's legacy?

According to a political supporter of the family, when the Agbayani children were young, they were not inclined to join politics so nobody took up law. But Victor, an engineer by profession, was convinced by his father to run.

Victor was the first to follow in his father's footsteps when he ran for the Batasang Pambansa in his early 20s. He ran as an independent against the candidates of the dominant Kilusang Bagong Lipunan and won handily.

The 1986 Edsa people power revolution ended the nascent political career of Victor and also saw the elder Agbayani bowing out of power as the Aquino government replaced all incumbents with OICs.

Victor tried to return as congressman and lost. In 1988, his father tried to regain the governorship, but lost by some 300 votes.

For about six years, the Agbayanis were out of politics.

In 1992, the semi-retired patriarch was convinced by the then presidential candidate Fidel Ramos to run for governor. He won by a landslide.

In the 1995 local elections, the elder Agbayani again went into retirement, but two of his sons, Victor and Luis, became active in politics.

Victor ran unopposed for vice governor while Luis became mayor of Sual, where the Agbayanis maintain their residence and some businesses.

The 1998 election was a crucial fight for Victor as he went up against Ramos' sister, former Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani, for the governorship. He won by more than 150,000 votes. In 2001, Agbayani won a second term.

In Sual, Luis won in three consecutive mayoral races.

The youngest Agbayani, Teresita Victoria, is set to take over the mayoral post that her brother Luis will relinquish. Victoria, a singer-composer, is a political neophyte.

Luis Agbayani's rival for the first congressional district seat is reelectionist Rep. Arthur Celeste, who belongs to another powerful local family.

Three members of the Celeste family are gunning for various posts in the province.

Celeste's brother Alfonso is running for mayor of Bolinao while another, George, is running for town councilor.

In the third district, retired Gen. Orlando Soriano is running for congressman while his brother, Alfonso, is running for a third term as mayor of Malasiqui town.

Rep. Conrado Estrella III and his brother Robert are running for their second terms as congressman and provincial board member of the sixth district, respectively.

In the first district, former Sual Mayor Sergio Jimenez is running for provincial board member while his wife, incumbent Mayor Angelita Jimenez, is running unopposed.

Outgoing Anda Mayor Alice Pulido is running for provincial board member while her husband, board member Nestor Pulido, will run for Anda mayor.

In Alcala town, Mayor Juanito Collado is running for reelection against his younger brother Manuel.

In San Carlos City, reelectionist Mayor Julian Resuello took his own son, Julier Resuello, for his running mate.

Jeanne Jinky Zaplan, wife of Sta. Barbara Mayor Lito Zaplan, is running against Reggie Zaplan, the mayor's first wife.

Isabela

Six members of the Dy family are offering their services to the people of Isabela on May 10.

Five of the Dys running in the May 10 elections are sons of the late family patriarch Faustino Dy Sr., who served for 28 years until his death in 1993.

Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy Jr., who previously served for three terms as congressman of the second district, is running for reelection against four opponents.

His brother, Faustino Dy III, is seeking a second term as representative of the third district, against Carlos Chan, a former city councilor.

Their brothers, Cauayan City Mayor Caesar Dy and Alicia Mayor Napoleon Dy, are running for reelection.

Another brother, businessman Alexander Dy, is running for mayor of San Mariano while a nephew, Benjamin Dy Jr., the son of former Isabela Gov. Benjamin Dy Sr., is vying for the mayoral seat of Angadanan town.

Nueva Vizcaya

Former Vice Gov. Ruth Padilla is running for the province's lone congressional seat that is being vacated by her husband, House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla who is running for senator under the ticket of Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Three members of the Balgos clan of Bambang town are running for reelection: board member Flaviano Balgos Jr., his younger brother Bambang Mayor Pepito Balgos and their nephew board member Edgardo Balgos.

Quirino

Two members of the Cua family are running for reelection.

Rep. Junie Cua is facing Dante Valencia, the same opponent he defeated in 2001.

Cua's 26-year-old son, Vice Gov. Dakila Carlo Cua, is running unopposed.

Cagayan

The three dominant political families of Cagayan—the Enriles, Mambas and Tings—have members running against one another in the May elections.

Rep. Jack Enrile is running for reelection in the first district against lawyer Victor Padilla, the same candidate he defeated in 2001.

Jack's father, former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, is running for senator under the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

In Tuao town, William Mamba is running for mayor against Estrella Dayag. William is aiming to replace his brother, outgoing Mayor Francisco Mamba Jr.

Their brother, third district Rep. Emmanuel Mamba, another former mayor, is running for reelection.

The Mambas are sons of Francisco Mamba, who was at different times congressman, Tuao mayor and provincial governor.

Former Tuguegarao Mayor Delfin Ting is challenging Rep. Emmanuel Mamba's reelection bid.

Ting's son, Tuguegarao Mayor Randolph Ting, is running for reelection. Another son, Michael Ting, is running for councilor. ***Reports from Leoncio Balbin Jr., Villamor Visaya Jr., Cristina Arzadon, Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Peter La. Julian, Gia Damaso-Dumo, Artha Kira Paredes, Frank Cimatu, Melvin Gascon and Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

(Tomorrow: Part 2/Central Luzon)

Oh, my 'gulay,' kids dish out vegetable art!

From page A1

50 schoolchildren the idea to carve art out of fresh vegetables for an Earth Day exhibit.

The children's "vegetable art" is intended to portray the evils that plague the vegetable trade in the Cordillera, according to Josephine Banasan, executive director of the environmental group Cordillera Green Network (CGN).

The group sponsored an Earth Day workshop for the children, aged five to 14, on Wednesday.

CGN director Rafael Kapunan said that in asking sculptor Kigao Rosimo to coach the children during the workshop, the group did not impose its views on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or the impact of globalization on the local economy.

But the resulting art pieces, as well as the skits the children developed to accompany their exhibit, were a rebuke directed at unfair global trade and the competition between local produce and imported vegetables from China and Europe, Banasan said.

Last year, the CGN sponsored the hunger strike of Filipino artists and an American Peace Corps volunteer protesting the commercialization of GM food in the Philippines.

For this year, the Earth Day activities were timed with the release of a Department of Agriculture circular that includes potatoes and soybeans among the country's accredited commercial GM food.

Naming art

The children neither signed nor labeled their artwork, so Kidlat spent most of his time on Wednesday naming the landscape of vegetables.

A small piece made up of scooped-out sayote linked with toothpicks he titled "Sayote turtle."

Other pieces he named "Ampalaya (bitter gourd) lizard" and "Pipino (cucumber) Gila monster."

He recalled that he was giggling when he affixed "Sili (pepper) stairs" to a village diorama—a pumpkin house with carved doors and windows against which a radish staircase with pepper steps is mounted, and which is set in a yard littered with snow peas seeds to create a stone pathway that leads to a bridge made of string beans and okra.

Dinosaur made of bell peppers

Another diorama presented this scene: farms made of upo, cucumber and eggplant facing a makeshift sea on which cucumber boats are sailing.

Kidlat said he was equally delighted at seeing the children's "vegetable animals."

He was particularly impressed by a smiling pig carved out of *puso ng saging* (young banana fruit), with carrot legs and young corn ears, and a dinosaur made of bell peppers.

Banasan, a member of Kidlat's Sunflower Collective of filmmakers, said the CGN was unaware that the exhibit was held on the day the Second National Vegetable Congress opened in La Trinidad, Benguet.

However, she said, the children's vegetable art could very well embody the farmers' sentiments.

Bishop hits Pagcor's use of funds for GMA

From page A1

Pagcor also incurred "substantial expenses" for the food and transportation of barangay leaders from all over the country during their weekly meetings since the start of the election campaign, and for "monetary dole-outs" for these community leaders tasked with the campaign for the President, according to documents from employees of the gaming firm.

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"That's part of our 'Sulong Barangay' program," he said in a phone interview. "Of course, we spend so many millions on projects that we do for the government. But that's because the President has directed us to bring Pagcor to the people."

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'What's wrong with that?'

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Personal gain

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Pagcor Chair Efraim Genuino, known to be a good friend of the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, had also approved the purchase of P18.4 million worth of luxury vehicles for the use of 13 Pagcor officials, the documents showed.

The Pagcor board also recently increased the retirement pay of board directors from P500,000 per year of service to a flat rate of P7 million for those who had served at least one year, and approved additional monetary compensation for every subsequent year.

Relatives of Pagcor officials are also benefiting from government funds, according to the employees.

P1 million daily

A contract for the supply of Figaro coffee worth P1 million daily has been awarded to the siblings of Pagcor president and chief operating officer Butch Francisco without bidding, according to the summary of allegations of mismanagement by Pagcor officials, which included the appointment of relatives and friends of Pagcor officials to the agency.

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GMA knows what's going on

Cruz said it was "almost impossible" that Ms Macapagal was not aware of what was going on at Pagcor. The archbishop said that he had informed Ms Macapagal "through a very close friend of the President" of the gross mismanagement at the agency.

Cruz received a copy of all the documents pertaining to the mismanagement of Pagcor on Feb. 14. He transmitted the materials to the Office of the President on Mar. 3 but was told two weeks ago that the matter had been referred to the departments concerned.

Scared

"I did not want to make noise. I thought I would give the President a chance to correct it (Pagcor mismanagement) so I made the matter reach her, but nothing happened. I think I will die not knowing what happened," Cruz said.

He said that he was scared to come out with the information against Pagcor's top brass because "many people disappear in Pagcor or are hurt," alluding to Edgar Bentain, a Pagcor employee who mysteriously disappeared after leaking a video showing former President Joseph Estrada playing in a Pagcor casino.

Not for or against

"That is not my worry," Cruz said when asked how he thought the exposé would affect the President's candidacy.

"My intention is for Pagcor [to be cleaned up.] I did not do this for her or against her," he said, adding that "everybody knows that [the President is spending government money]."

Ms Macapagal is also accused of using the road users' tax and the study now, pay later program in her campaign.

The Philippine Health Insurance Corp., another government-owned and-controlled corporation, has been accused of distributing Philhealth cards for the President's campaign through a P3.5-billion project for poor Filipinos. The project is funded by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

"After the elections, the economy will go down the drain because there is no more money. We will borrow again, and we already have a debt of about P5 trillion. How will we repay that?" the archbishop asked.

Plunderwatch

Cruz turned over the documents to PlunderWatch, which will review them and determine what charges to file against Pagcor officials.

PlunderWatch's Carol Araullo said that the group would investigate if "other people in higher authority know and profit from this" Pagcor mismanagement.

FPJ to do an FVR in pursuit of presidential dream

From page A1

Bagong Umaga, and member of the Pinoy si FPJ Campaign.

Ramos eventually put up the Lakas Party and went on to win the 1992 election. He holds the post of chair emeritus of the ruling Lakas-CMD and is a staunch supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Araullo said Poe was in a "better position" than Ramos when the latter launched his candidacy for president.

"Ratings-wise, Poe is No. 1 in the surveys, while FVR was always eating the dust of Miriam Defensor-Santiago. Poe has a bigger machinery today compared to the ragtag band of supporters Ramos was able to cobble together," Araullo said.

'Let it flow'

Poe himself, when asked in Nasugbu, Batangas, to comment on Ramos' statement, gave this terse reply: "I would rather take the suggestion of President Erap."

The standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino was referring to the statement of ousted President Joseph Estrada, also aired on Wednesday, that it was Lacson who should drop his candidacy in Poe's favor.

"Can No. 1 give up for No. 4?" Estrada had said, referring to the respective standings of Poe and Lacson in the surveys.

Poe said there was no need to put a deadline on the unity talks between him and Lacson.

"Just let it flow," he said. "If it's meant to be, then it's meant to be."

Asked whether the stalled talks still had a chance of taking off, he said: "We always hope for unity but as of now, *bayaan muna natin ganyan* (let it stay that way).

Poe said what was important was not so much the unity talks as his and his running mate Sen. Loren Legarda's campaign.

He admitted in response to a question that he and Lacson had not been exchanging text messages lately. Asked why, he joked that their phone batteries were constantly low.

Told that according to Lacson, a clash of "superegos" was preventing the unity talks from pushing through, he said: "I don't think so. I've been an actor for almost 50 years. I don't think that came up."

Poe said he was "happy" that Lacson had an avowed supply of campaign funds, and joked in Filipino: "Maybe he can give me something to bet on the races."

Told that Lacson had said his Chinese-Filipino financiers' support was non-transferable, Poe said, still joking, that this meant he would have no money for the horse races.

Encouraged

In Agusan del Sur, Lacson said he was encouraged by Ramos' statement that Poe had to slide down if the opposition was to forge a united front for the May 10 elections.

"Maybe [Ramos] loves this country more than the [KNP] officials who keep on urging [Poe] to stay in the court and run for the presidency," Lacson said.

Asked if he and Ramos had talked recently, the senator said: "We haven't talked. I myself was surprised when I heard [his remarks]."

He said he saw no reason to question Ramos' intention in making the statement.

Lacson is a former officer of the Philippine Constabulary, which Ramos headed before he took on the post of Armed Forces chief of staff immediately after Edsa I in 1986.

The two men have common friends among the retired officers of both the PC and the Philippine National Police, which Lacson once headed. These include Renato de Villa, a former PC chief and Ramos' defense secretary, and former PNP chief Recaredo Sarmiento.

Sarmiento is one of the prime movers of the group of retired military and police officers who will take on the task of guarding Lacson's votes.

'Imagining things'

Lacson denied Estrada's remark on Wednesday that he had promised to just run for senator if he failed to gain wide support in the run-up to the elections.

"He must be imagining things," he said of his longtime superior, whom he first served directly as one of the task force chiefs of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission that Estrada headed in the 1990s.

He added: "I deny that. I don't have an agreement with him that I'd withdraw from the race and run for senator if I don't get better ratings in the surveys because I'm still a senator until 2007."

Lacson was not present at Estrada's birthday celebration on Monday at his vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal.

Estrada has openly endorsed the candidacy of Poe, his bosom buddy, and has called Lacson a stumbling block to the opposition's efforts at unification.

The senator said he was not obligated to follow Estrada's call for him to step down, but continued to credit the latter for being consistent in his support of Poe.

Sacrifice

In a phone interview from Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Estrada appealed to the two men's sense of patriotism.

"If they love the country, they must sacrifice and give way to save the country from bankruptcy and corruption," he said, adding: "*Bahala na sila. Ayaw ko nang makialam* (I leave it up to them. I don't want to intervene anymore)."

Estrada admitted that he had not talked with Lacson in person or by phone for three months now.

He reiterated his certainty that even if the unity talks failed, Poe would eventually win the presidency.

On Ramos' suggestion that Poe slide down to being the vice presidential candidate to allow him to learn the job of president, Estrada said: "There is no need for that. There is no school for presidents."

He described the task of governing the country as a "learning in progress."

"As long as you get people with unquestionable integrity, people with the right mind and put them in the right places, then you will be all right," said Estrada, who is in detention on charges of graft and plunder.

Trojan horse

In a phone interview, KNP senatorial candidate Ernesto Herrera dismissed Ramos' suggestion for Poe to withdraw as a "Trojan horse statement."

"The administration knows that it is easier for [Ms Macapagal] to defeat Lacson compared to FPJ," he said.

Herrera said Ramos' statement was "an indication that the administration camp is running scared of FPJ."

"They know that FPJ is already the winner," he said.

But two congressmen, Davao del Sur Rep. Douglas Cagas of the Nationalist People's Coalition and Pampanga Rep. Oscar Rodriguez of the Lakas-CMD, said the failed unity talks between Poe and Lacson had shattered the image of the opposition and further diminished its chances of beating Ms Macapagal.

With reports from Armand N. Nocum and Cynthia D. Balana

Edsa opposition rally gains more participants

From page A1

the move was spearheaded not only by political parties but also by a multi-sectoral alliance composed of civil society and party-list groups, the youth sector and religious groups, among them, Bayan Muna, Anakbayan, Anakpawis, Gabriela and Migrante.

Poe said that although he was backing the rally, he would not be able to make it as he had a prior engagement. But he reminded his supporters in Nasugbu, Batangas, yesterday that his senatorial candidates Boots Anson-Roa and Amina Rasul had led the battle when they filed a case against Ms Macapagal asking the Supreme Court to make her take a leave of absence because of strong suspicions that government resources were being used to fund her campaign.

Lacson, for his part, said he had discouraged the holding of the rally even if he agreed there was a need to expose the administration's reported abuses. "I support it, but it could lead to something. It would be better to just wait for Election Day," he told reporters yesterday in Agusan del Sur.

Contingency measures

Still, the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security will convene this morning to discuss contingency measures for the protest action.

"This is a desperate move by the opposition groups, and we take this as a virtual admission that the President is already a sure winner on May 10," said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye. "We believe in free speech but they should exercise restraint should this activity push through," he said.

"I see this as a sign that the opposition is really worried to the point that they will mobilize a rally because they see that support for the President is getting stronger and stronger," said Michael Defensor, presidential campaign spokesperson. "This is a sign of weakness of the opposition because the petitions they filed in the Supreme Court and the Commission on Elections have been dismissed," he said, adding that no government funds are being used in the President's campaign.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said contingency measures would be in place to ensure political stability and peace and order.

No alert status

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, however, said he saw no need to raise the alert status of both the military and police.

"The National Capital Region Police Office, which is in charge in Metro Manila, knows this is not the first time we are faced with such a situation. Even during the visit of heads of states, this happens," he said, adding that the "usual measures" to prevent trouble during big protest actions might be adopted.

Galvez-Tan, lawyer Ed Araullo, spokesperson of Kilos para sa Bagong Umaga and Pinoy si FPJ Campaign to Save Democracy, Lito Anzures of Poe's media team, and Luis Sison, spokesperson for Villanueva's Bangon Pilipinas, had agreed in principle to support the plan in a meeting the other day.

Sison, however, said Villanueva's camp had yet to receive an official invitation from the rally organizers.

Caution

But Bayan Muna might cancel the rally should it fail to get a categorical commitment from the other presidential candidates, said Santiago. "As far as we are concerned, there is nothing definite yet. It may push through, depending on the responses of major parties and the evolving situation," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Francis Pangilinan, however, cautioned the four presidential candidates against "going to the streets at this time," saying a huge rally could be open to sabotage by provocateurs and destabilizers.

"While we believe in the right to a peaceful assembly, the leaders of the planned May 1 rally against the President should think twice. Groups that have plotted and who continue to plot destabilization efforts would only be so happy to take advantage of a rally of highly charged partisan followers of various national candidates," he said.

Dismissing Pangilinan's fears of a security "nightmare," Galvez-Tan said this was a remote possibility since Edsa had always been a "peaceful" venue for protest actions.

Administration congressman Rep. Prospero Nograles (Davao City) said the rally would serve no purpose but to drag down the Philippines anew in the eyes of local and foreign investors, and foment uncertainty and polarization among the people.

Show evidence

"If they really have firm evidence against the administration, let them do it in the proper venues in respect for due process and the rule of law," he said.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo said bigger protest actions could be expected on May 1 this year because of the presidential elections.

But he doubted if a huge crowd would turn up for the anti-government forces.

The "great majority of the members of the labor movement" would be celebrating Labor Day with the President, he said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora, Alcuin Papa, Cynthia D.Balana*

17 RP sites environment hot spots

From page A1

2. Taal Lake in Batangas is dying just like Laguna Lake. Both are heavily polluted with chemical, human waste and garbage.

3. Pansipit River in Batangas is so polluted that aquatic life is almost nonexistent.

4. Mt. Isarog in Camarines Sur was declared a national park and yet its denudation continues.

5. Lake Bato in both Camarines Sur and Albay is in an extremely critical state of destruction.

6. The San Vicente-Taytay-Roxas forest in Palawan is no longer a forest.

7. The Northwest Peninsula of Panay in Aklan and Antique.

8. The Central Panay mountains of Madjaas-Baloi complex.

9. The Northwestern Panay or Gigantes.

10. The Olangui River in Lanao del Norte.

11. Mt. Apo in North Cotabato, Davao del Sur and Davao City.

12. Mt. Busa in Kiamba, Sarangani and South Cotabato.

13. Mt. Kitanglad in Bukidnon.

14. Mt. Matutum in North Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Sarangani, South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

15. Lake Duminagat in Misamis Occidental.

16. Mt. Malindang in Misamis Occidental, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur.

17. Basilan in Mindanao.

All the endangered forests, mountains and bodies of water are victims of man's desire for money.

Logging, mining

Without question, logging and mining are the most damaging practices. As late as 1945, Philippine forests and mountains were pristine and abundant with nature's bounty. However, after World War II when the Philippines was given the so-called war damage reparations by Japan in 1950, the degradation began.

Abra River
Amburayan River
Bued River
Agno River
Sipalay River
Pagatban River
Agusan River

Instead of the promised cash, second-hand mining and logging equipment poured into the country. Even second-hand fishing boats arrived.

Thus, the Philippine environment suffered. It is still suffering.

There are three hot spots everyone should know:

1. The nickel processing plant in Palawan, which is expected to further pollute the waters there.

2. The FMC Colloids Corp., seaweed processing plant in Cebu, which has been polluting the Strait of Mactan since 20 years ago.

3. The quarry activities in Rodriguez and San Mateo towns in Rizal which have reduced the mountains to flat land, almost, that is. Just watch when the next giant typhoon comes to Rizal.

But there is a glimmer of hope. There is light at the end of the long, gloomy tunnel of destruction. That hope and sunshine are the Filipinos.

Now is your chance to make a difference. Let us all embark on a massive education campaign. It would be a lifetime work.

The Unesco Commission on Science and Technology and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will lead the education campaign, starting with the provinces where the critical areas are located.

We already contacted the HAS Club in Bataan, which will plant trees on the denuded mountains as soon as the rains come.

We shall go around the country on a tree-planting spree.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bishop hits Pagcor's use of funds for GMA

From page A1

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Cruz received a copy of all the documents pertaining to the mismanagement of Pagcor on Feb. 14. He transmitted the materials to the Office of the President on Mar. 3 but was told two weeks ago that the matter had been referred to the departments concerned.

Scared

"I did not want to make noise. I thought I would give the President a chance to correct it (Pagcor mismanagement) so I made the matter reach her, but nothing happened. I think I will die not knowing what happened," Cruz said.

He said that he was scared to come out with the information against Pagcor's top brass because "many people disappear in Pagcor or are hurt," alluding to Edgar Bentain, a Pagcor employee who mysteriously disappeared after leaking a video showing former President Joseph Estrada playing in a Pagcor casino.

Not for or against

"That is not my worry," Cruz said when asked how he thought the exposé would affect the President's candidacy.

"My intention is for Pagcor [to be cleaned up.] I did not do this for her or against her," he said, adding that "everybody knows that [the President is spending government money]."

Ms Macapagal is also accused of using the road users' tax and the study now, pay later program in her campaign.

The Philippine Health Insurance Corp., another government-owned and-controlled corporation, has been accused of distributing Philhealth cards for the President's campaign through a P3.5-billion project for poor Filipinos. The project is funded by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

"After the elections, the economy will go down the drain because there is no more money. We will borrow again, and we already have a debt of about P5 trillion. How will we repay that?" the archbishop asked.

Plunderwatch

Cruz turned over the documents to PlunderWatch, which will review them and determine what charges to file against Pagcor officials.

PlunderWatch's Carol Araullo said that the group would investigate if "other people in higher authority know and profit from this" Pagcor mismanagement.

FPJ to do an FVR in pursuit of presidential dream

From page A1

Bagong Umaga, and member of the Pinoy si FPJ Campaign.

Ramos eventually put up the Lakas Party and went on to win the 1992 election. He holds the post of chair emeritus of the ruling Lakas-CMD and is a staunch supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Araullo said Poe was in a "better position" than Ramos when the latter launched his candidacy for president.

"Ratings-wise, Poe is No. 1 in the surveys, while FVR was always eating the dust of Miriam Defensor-Santiago. Poe has a bigger machinery today compared to the ragtag band of supporters Ramos was able to cobble together," Araullo said.

'Let it flow'

Poe himself, when asked in Nasugbu, Batangas, to comment on Ramos' statement, gave this terse reply: "I would rather take the suggestion of President Erap."

The standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino was referring to the statement of ousted President Joseph Estrada, also aired on Wednesday, that it was Lacson who should drop his candidacy in Poe's favor.

"Can No. 1 give up for No. 4?" Estrada had said, referring to the respective standings of Poe and Lacson in the surveys.

Poe said there was no need to put a deadline on the unity talks between him and Lacson.

"Just let it flow," he said. "If it's meant to be, then it's meant to be."

Asked whether the stalled talks still had a chance of taking off, he said: "We always hope for unity but as of now, *bayaan muna natin ganyan* (let it stay that way).

Poe said what was important was not so much the unity talks as his and his running mate Sen. Loren Legarda's campaign.

He admitted in response to a question that he and Lacson had not been exchanging text messages lately. Asked why, he joked that their phone batteries were constantly low.

Told that according to Lacson, a clash of "superegos" was preventing the unity talks from pushing through, he said: "I don't think so. I've been an actor for almost 50 years. I don't think that came up."

Poe said he was "happy" that Lacson had an avowed supply of campaign funds, and joked in Filipino: "Maybe he can give me something to bet on the races."

Told that Lacson had said his Chinese-Filipino financiers' support was non-transferable, Poe said, still joking, that this meant he would have no money for the horse races.

Encouraged

In Agusan del Sur, Lacson said he was encouraged by Ramos' statement that Poe had to slide down if the opposition was to forge a united front for the May 10 elections.

"Maybe [Ramos] loves this country more than the [KNP] officials who keep on urging [Poe] to stay in the court and run for the presidency," Lacson said.

Asked if he and Ramos had talked recently, the senator said: "We haven't talked. I myself was surprised when I heard [his remarks]."

He said he saw no reason to question Ramos' intention in making the statement.

Lacson is a former officer of the Philippine Constabulary, which Ramos headed before he took on the post of Armed Forces chief of staff immediately after Edsa I in 1986.

The two men have common friends among the retired officers of both the PC and the Philippine National Police, which Lacson once headed. These include Renato de Villa, a former PC chief and Ramos' defense secretary, and former PNP chief Recaredo Sarmiento.

Sarmiento is one of the prime movers of the group of retired military and police officers who will take on the task of guarding Lacson's votes.

'Imagining things'

Lacson denied Estrada's remark on Wednesday that he had promised to just run for senator if he failed to gain wide support in the run-up to the elections.

"He must be imagining things," he said of his longtime superior, whom he first served directly as one of the task force chiefs of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission that Estrada headed in the 1990s.

He added: "I deny that. I don't have an agreement with him that I'd withdraw from the race and run for senator if I don't get better ratings in the surveys because I'm still a senator until 2007."

Lacson was not present at Estrada's birthday celebration on Monday at his vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal.

Estrada has openly endorsed the candidacy of Poe, his bosom buddy, and has called Lacson a stumbling block to the opposition's efforts at unification.

The senator said he was not obligated to follow Estrada's call for him to step down, but continued to credit the latter for being consistent in his support of Poe.

Sacrifice

In a phone interview from Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Estrada appealed to the two men's sense of patriotism.

"If they love the country, they must sacrifice and give way to save the country from bankruptcy and corruption," he said, adding: "*Bahala na sila. Ayaw ko nang makialam* (I leave it up to them. I don't want to intervene anymore)."

Estrada admitted that he had not talked with Lacson in person or by phone for three months now.

He reiterated his certainty that even if the unity talks failed, Poe would eventually win the presidency.

On Ramos' suggestion that Poe slide down to being the vice presidential candidate to allow him to learn the job of president, Estrada said: "There is no need for that. There is no school for presidents."

He described the task of governing the country as a "learning in progress."

"As long as you get people with unquestionable integrity, people with the right mind and put them in the right places, then you will be all right," said Estrada, who is in detention on charges of graft and plunder.

Trojan horse

In a phone interview, KNP senatorial candidate Ernesto Herrera dismissed Ramos' suggestion for Poe to withdraw as a "Trojan horse statement."

"The administration knows that it is easier for [Ms Macapagal] to defeat Lacson compared to FPJ," he said.

Herrera said Ramos' statement was "an indication that the administration camp is running scared of FPJ."

"They know that FPJ is already the winner," he said.

But two congressmen, Davao del Sur Rep. Douglas Cagas of the Nationalist People's Coalition and Pampanga Rep. Oscar Rodriguez of the Lakas-CMD, said the failed unity talks between Poe and Lacson had shattered the image of the opposition and further diminished its chances of beating Ms Macapagal.

With reports from Armand N. Nocum and Cynthia D. Balana

Edsa opposition rally gains more participants

From page A1

the move was spearheaded not only by political parties but also by a multi-sectoral alliance composed of civil society and party-list groups, the youth sector and religious groups, among them, Bayan Muna, Anakbayan, Anakpawis, Gabriela and Migrante.

Poe said that although he was backing the rally, he would not be able to make it as he had a prior engagement. But he reminded his supporters in Nasugbu, Batangas, yesterday that his senatorial candidates Boots Anson-Roa and Amina Rasul had led the battle when they filed a case against Ms Macapagal asking the Supreme Court to make her take a leave of absence because of strong suspicions that government resources were being used to fund her campaign.

Lacson, for his part, said he had discouraged the holding of the rally even if he agreed there was a need to expose the administration's reported abuses. "I support it, but it could lead to something. It would be better to just wait for Election Day," he told reporters yesterday in Agusan del Sur.

Contingency measures

Still, the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security will convene this morning to discuss contingency measures for the protest action.

"This is a desperate move by the opposition groups, and we take this as a virtual admission that the President is already a sure winner on May 10," said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye. "We believe in free speech but they should exercise restraint should this activity push through," he said.

"I see this as a sign that the opposition is really worried to the point that they will mobilize a rally because they see that support for the President . getting stronger and stronger," said Michael Defensor, presidential campaign spokesperson. "This is a sign of weakness of the opposition because the petitions they filed in the Supreme Court and the Commission on Elections have been dismissed," he said, adding that no government funds are being used in the President's campaign.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said contingency measures would be in place to ensure political stability and peace and order.

No alert status

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, however, said he saw no need to raise the alert status of both the military and police.

"The National Capital Region Police Office, which is in charge in Metro Manila, knows this is not the first time we are faced with such a situation. Even during the visit of heads of states, this happens," he said, adding that the "usual measures" to prevent trouble during big protest actions might be adopted.

Galvez-Tan, lawyer Ed Araullo, spokesperson of Kilos para sa Bagong Umaga and Pinoy si FPJ Campaign to Save Democracy, Lito Anzures of Poe's media team, and Luis Sison, spokesperson for Villanueva's Bangon Pilipinas, had agreed in principle to support the plan in a meeting the other day.

Sison, however, said Villanueva's camp had yet to receive an official invitation from the rally organizers.

Caution

But Bayan Muna might cancel the rally should it fail to get a categorical commitment from the other presidential candidates, said Santiago. "As far as we are concerned, there is nothing definite yet. It may push through, depending on the responses of major parties and the evolving situation," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Francis Pangilinan, however, cautioned the four presidential candidates against "going to the streets at this time," saying a huge rally could be open to sabotage by provocateurs and destabilizers.

"While we believe in the right to a peaceful assembly, the leaders of the planned May 1 rally against the President should think twice. Groups that have plotted and who continue to plot destabilization efforts would only be so happy to take advantage of a rally of highly charged partisan followers of various national candidates," he said.

Dismissing Pangilinan's fears of a security "nightmare," Galvez-Tan said this was a remote possibility since Edsa had always been a "peaceful" venue for protest actions.

Administration congressman Rep. Prospero Nograles (Davao City) said the rally would serve no purpose but to drag down the Philippines anew in the eyes of local and foreign investors, and foment uncertainty and polarization among the people.

Show evidence

"If they really have firm evidence against the administration, let them do it in the proper venues in respect for due process and the rule of law," he said.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo said bigger protest actions could be expected on May 1 this year because of the presidential elections.

But he doubted if a huge crowd would turn up for the anti-government forces.

The "great majority of the members of the labor movement" would be celebrating Labor Day with the President, he said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora, Alcuin Papa, Cynthia D.Balana*

17 RP sites environment hot spots

From page A1

2. Taal Lake in Batangas is dying just like Laguna Lake. Both are heavily polluted with chemical, human waste and garbage.

3. Pansipit River in Batangas is so polluted that aquatic life is almost nonexistent.

4. Mt. Isarog in Camarines Sur was declared a national park and yet its denudation continues.

5. Lake Bato in both Camarines Sur and Albay is in an extremely critical state of destruction.

6. The San Vicente-Taytay-Roxas forest in Palawan is no longer a forest.

7. The Northwest Peninsula of Panay in Aklan and Antique.

8. The Central Panay mountains of Madjaas-Baloi complex.

9. The Northwestern Panay or Gigantes.

10. The Olangui River in Lanao del Norte.

11. Mt. Apo in North Cotabato, Davao del Sur and Davao City.

12. Mt. Busa in Kiamba, Sarangani and South Cotabato.

13. Mt. Kitanglad in Bukidnon.

14. Mt. Matutum in North Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Sarangani, South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

15. Lake Duminagat in Misamis Occidental.

16. Mt. Malindang in Misamis Occidental, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur.

17. Basilan in Mindanao.

All the endangered forests, mountains and bodies of water are victims of man's desire for money.

Logging, mining

Without question, logging and mining are the most damaging practices. As late as 1945, Philippine forests and mountains were pristine and abundant with nature's bounty. However, after World War II when the Philippines was given the so-called war damage reparations by Japan in 1950, the degradation began.

Instead of the promised cash, second-hand mining and logging equipment poured into the country. Even second-hand fishing boats arrived.

Thus, the Philippine environment suffered. It is still suffering.

There are three hot spots everyone should know:

1. The nickel processing plant in Palawan, which is expected to further pollute the waters there.

2. The FMC Colloids Corp., seaweed processing plant in Cebu, which has been polluting the Strait of Mactan since 20 years ago.

3. The quarry activities in Rodriguez and San Mateo towns in Rizal which have reduced the mountains to flat land, almost, that is. Just watch when the next giant typhoon comes to Rizal.

But there is a glimmer of hope. There is light at the end of the long, gloomy tunnel of destruction. That hope and sunshine are the Filipinos.

Now is your chance to make a difference. Let us all embark on a massive education campaign. It would be a lifetime work.

The Unesco Commission on Science and Technology and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will lead the education campaign, starting with the provinces where the critical areas are located.

We already contacted the HAS Club in Bataan, which will plant trees on the denuded mountains as soon as the rains come.

We shall go around the country on a tree-planting spree.

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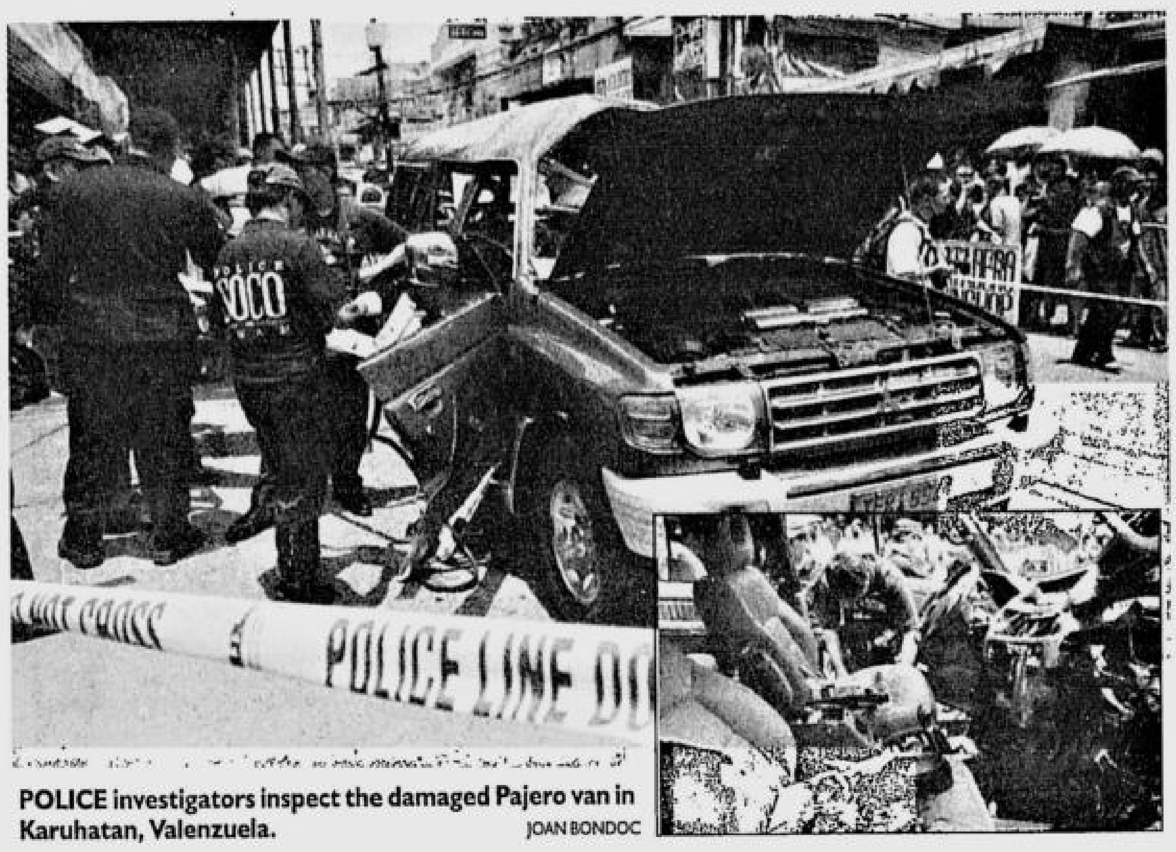

POLICE investigators inspect the damaged Pajero van in Karuhatan, Valenzuela. JOAN BONDOC

Chinoy trader dies in Pajero blast

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

THE AIR-CONDITIONER was on. The car stereo was playing. Everything seemed normal until the front portion of the Mistubishi Pajero exploded, killing a Filipino-Chinese businessman and injuring his driver in Valenzuela City yesterday.

Shards of broken glass also wounded a 38-year-old woman who was just walking nearby.

Oil trader Peter Dy, 58, died while undergoing treatment, while his driver Janvil Fajardo, 25, sustained minor wounds in his face and arms.

Mary Jane Peron, 37, who had just come from the Karuhatan Public Market, also suffered wounds in her head.

Dy and Fajardo were on their way home about 10 a.m. after dropping by South Supermarket. Fajardo told the INQUIRER he did not notice anything unusual.

When they turned to T. De Leon Street, the compartment in front of Dy exploded. Witnesses told the police they saw a thick white smoke after the loud explosion.

Because of the impact, all the glass windows of the red Pajero were shattered. The iron roof bulged.

Impact

But the impact was concentrated on the passenger's seat. The door on the passenger's side almost fell. The compartment up to the car stereo and cooling system was wrecked.

Dy and Fajardo were brought to the Fatima Medical Center where Dy later died. Peron was brought to the Valenzuela General Hospital, case investigator SPO2 Jess Sagisi told the INQUIRER.

Scene of the Crime operatives recovered 10 shrapnels in Dy's left arm but his family later refused to have the victim autopsied. Dr. Felimon Porciuncula told the INQUIRER more shrapnels could have hit Dy in the other parts of his body.

Police also recovered a five-star firecracker inside Dy's black belt bag but it did not explode.

Porciuncula said it was likely that an improvised pipe bomb was planted inside the front portion of the car, either inside the compartment or in the cooling system.

Fajardo, the victim's driver for eight months now, said Dy regularly used the Pajero whenever he went out.

Tension .

City police chief Jose Marcelo said Dy's relatives admitted that tension was brewing within the family. Last month, one of Dy's children, who was also on board the red Pajero at the time, was abducted but freed after six hours.

Last week, while Dy was preparing to go to Baguio City, he discovered that his brake pipes had been sliced, Marcelo added.

Northern Police District Director Marcelino Franco said the explosion could have been motivated by personal grudges. Some witnesses alleged that the killing was politically motivated but the police refused to confirm this.

Banks urged to install ample security systems

THE NATIONAL Capital Region Police Office will recommend the closure of banks in the metropolis which do not have sufficient security systems.

Thus said NCRPO Director Ricardo De Leon days after five armed suspects, including a woman, robbed a bank in Quezon City which was 50 meters away from a police community precinct.

"The bank owners always think about the extra costs. They consider security systems, like closed circuit television and alarm systems, as their last priority," De Leon said yesterday.

On Monday, five robbers barged into the Asiatrust Bank on E. Rodriguez Avenue, Barangay Mariana, and carted away about P100,000. The suspects fled by flagging down a passenger jeepney after the 10-minute robbery.

"If the security requirement is not complete, we can recommend the closure of the particular bank to the Banko Sentral ng Pilipinas," De Leon added.

He also appealed to bank employees to alarm the police immediately during robberies.

De Leon said, as much as possible, the police will not engage the robbers in a bloody shootout inside the bank. Instead, they would set up security dragnets to prevent the robbers from escaping. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Valenzuela, QC not hot spots, say cop chiefs

By Tina Santos

THE CENTRAL Police District director and Valenzuela City police chief have cried foul over the inclusion of their respective areas of jurisdiction in the list of election hot spots earlier identified by the National Capital Region Police Office.

In Quezon City, NCRPO lists Barangays Payatas, Damayang Lagi, Tandang Sora, Batasan Hills, Balara and UP Campus as among the areas of concern, while Valenzuela hot spots include Barangays Malinta, Ugong and Canumay.

But CPD director Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro said the areas the NCRPO identified as areas of immediate concern neither have history of violence during the past elections nor are they expecting such incident to erupt.

"Warring political factions or violence have not been our consideration in identifying the areas of immediate concern. We merely based our assessment on the number of voters since these areas have the most number of voters," Castro told INQUIRER.

Meanwhile, Senior Supt. Jose Marcelo, Valenzuela City police chief, has vehemently denied earlier reports there are election hotspots in his area of jurisdiction.

The denial followed the sacking of his own intelligence officer, identified as Senior Insp. Ronaldo Lumactod, for allegedly feeding the NCRPO the wrong information and without his authority. Lumactod could not be immediately reached for comment.

METROBRIEFS

No Edsa rally

METRO Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday appealed to anti-administration presidential candidates not to use Edsa in holding protest rallies, stressing that he will not issue any permit allowing them to do so. He said the protesters could instead use Luneta or White Plains Road to hold their rallies. "I cannot just turn my back on my job. I have a responsibility to ensure that Metro Manila is taken care of," Fernando said. *Margaux Ortiz*

Earth Day rites

IMAGES that tell of man-made devastation inflicted on planet Earth marked the International Earth Day commemoration in Manila yesterday. "With the impact of these images, we want to raise environmental consciousness," said Fr. Benigno Beltran, SVD of the Parish of the Risen Christ in Smokey Mountain in Tondo, Manila. Beltran's environmental organization, Mga Anak ni Inang Daigdig (Manid), with the Philippine Center for Creative Imaging, and the Manila city government through the Museo ng Maynila, also handed out awards to the winners of the Wounded Earth Digital Art Competition. *Tarra Quismundo*

NBI reshuffle

FIVE divisions of the National Bureau of Investigation now have new chiefs as a result of a minor reshuffle that took effect three weeks ago. The reshuffle was effected on April 10 based on a special order signed by NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco, who said that the changes were done for organizational improvement. Wycoco said the transfers had the approval of the Commission on Elections. *Tarra Quismundo*

City Hall workers don new, floral uniforms

By Tarra Quismundo

PARA AKONG NASA GARDEN NITO A.!

A VISIT to the Manila City Hall today would bring one to a sight of clerks and secretaries dressed in bright floral blouses.

But their new look is not just because of the mood that came with summertime.

The floral shirts are the new uniforms of female employees, an attire that Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. is known to be fond of.

"At first they were hesitant because they were not used to wearing (floral printed blouses). But the others are getting used to it, and they are slowly acquiring it," said City Personnel division chief Corrie Arambulo.

Arambulo related that a Uniform Committee, composed of Manila's department heads, came up with the floral design upon Atienza's suggestions.

Before the new floral blouses came, City Hall's departments had their own uniforms.

The new uniforms for women are two sets each of turquoise blouses with large white flowers, and red ones printed with pink and white flowers.

The textile used, imported from Taiwan, was chosen by Atienza.

Two pairs of navy blue pants and a skirt complete the uniform set, which cost the annual clothing allowance of P4,000 each for almost 3,000 office-based female personnel.

"My belief is that you are more productive when you are wearing a colorful attire. It brightens up your day, when you look at the mirror in the morning," said Atienza.

Pig feed spill stalls traffic for four hours

OF ALL the things to snarl traffic in Manila, it was pig feed.

Motorists traveling on the northbound lane of the A.H. Lacson flyover in Manila yesterday got stuck in traffic during the morning rush due to several kilos of pig feed (*darak*) that littered the flyover.

SPO2 Mar Sakdalan from the traffic bureau of the Western Police District said the pig feed could have been spilled earlier from a delivery truck.

Because of the spill, motorists were asked to drive under the flyover, congesting traffic flow there for almost four hours.

Normal traffic flow was restored by 9 a.m., said Sakdalan.

Police, however, were unable to get the plate number of the truck or the name of its driver who supposedly spilled the feed. Sakdalan said there were no witnesses to the incident.

Barangay tanods, fire fighters and MMDA personnel helped rid the street of pig feed litter. *Niel Lim and Leila Salaverria*

Busted pipes blamed for poor water supply

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources has put the blame on the poorly maintained water pipelines that may have worsened the water situation in Metro Manila.

Busted pipes belonging to water concessionaires Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Company Inc. also contributed to the rapidly decreasing water supply from Angat Dam, DENR Secretary Elisea Gozun said in an interview.

Gozun said the agency and the National Water Resources Board have alarmed the private concessionaires' regulating agency—the Metropolitan Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System—to pressure both companies to solve their non-revenue water (NRW)-related problems.

Non-revenue water (NRW) is water wasted because of pilferage and damaged water connections.

Maynilad, which is delivering water to the west concession area, has about 71 percent as its NRW level. East concessionaire Manila Water, on the other hand, has about 49.9 percent.

NWRB executive director Ramon Alikpala said this should be a wake-up call for the MWSS and the two concessionaires, especially now that the water level in Angat Dam has reached a critical point. *Christine Gaylican*

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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Mangulat

BASKETBALL: 2004 NBA Playoffs-Nets vs Knicks, Game 3, East First Round; 7 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Star Sports: Spurs vs Grizzlies, Game 3, West First Round; 9:30 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—The first round series crosses the Hudson River as New York hosts New Jersey while all shook up, but not singing the blues, Memphis hosts its first ever NBA playoff match against San Antonio.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

AIR21 2004 TOUR PILIPINAS

Overall standings After Stage 8

10. R. Dolosa	(Metro Drug)	16:09 mins. behind
9. J. Millanes	(Postmen)	15:52 mins. behind
8. S. Barnachea	(Mail & More)	15.47 mins. behind
7. A. Primero	(Dole)	13:14 mins. behind
6. M. Ramos	(Samsung)	12.58 mins. behind
5. T. Martinez	(Beer na Beer)	12:49 mins. behind
4. E. Quinones	(Purefoods)	12.40 mins. behind
3. J. Calderon	(Beer na Beer)	9:58 mins. behind
2. R. Tanguilig	(PLDT)	7:19 mins behind
1. E. Domingo	(Postmen)	33:32.05

STUDIO 23
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FedEx
Mail & More
Tanduay
Beer na Beer
PLDT
SAMSUNG
PUREFOODS
Dole
Marsman Drysdale Medical Products, Inc.
METRO DRUG, INC.
PATROL 117 DILG
Rhum Riders
DOTC
AIR21

Domingo opens hefty Tour lead

By Marc Anthony Reyes

CABANATUAN CITY—Enrique Domingo salvaged second place for the day despite a broken handle post and erected a sizeable overall lead over Rhyan Tanguilig after the eighth stage of the Air21 Tour Pilipinas bikathon yesterday.

Although finishing more than three minutes behind stage winner Joel Calderon, the veteran Domingo, the Postmen skipper, opened a seven-minute, 19-second margin over Tanguilig, who finished third for the 144-km drive from Dagupan City.

"I wanted to win the stage but when my handle post broke down (in Guimba, Nueva Ecija), I concentrated on finishing the race without any trouble," said the 35-year-old Domingo, who started the day just 12 seconds ahead of Eboy Quiñones.

Calderon, second in the seventh lap behind Guimba townmate Oscar Fronda, stormed away from an eight-man lead pack that included Domingo and Tanguilig and soloed it home in three hours 27 minutes and 35 seconds. *(See results on A26)*

The 22-year-old Calderon was amply rewarded for his breakaway win as the Beer na Beer rider came out of nowhere to take third place overall, 9:58 behind Domingo.

Quiñones, who accounted for the country's lone cycling gold in the mountain bike division of last year's SEA Games in Vietnam, dropped to fourth overall, 12:40 off the pace.

The rest of the top 10 list also changed with rookie Tomas Martinez (12:49 behind) taking fifth, followed by Merculio Ramos (12:58), Albert Primero (13:14), Santi Barnachea (15:47), Joseph Millanes (15:52) and Renato Dolosa (16:09).

Domingo paced the eight-man lead pack that was formed when the peloton entered Malasiqui, Pangasinan. Riding with him were Calderon, Tanguilig, Fernando Alagano (Dole), Virgilio Espiritu (Beer na Beer), Benito Stalin (Purefoods), rookie Orlie Villanueva (Dole) and Joseph Millanes (Postmen).

"Setting the pace is tiring," said Domingo, who admitted he's more interested in winning the team crown and the sprint title. The team champion gets P1 million, while the overall individual winner gets P200,000. The Sprint King wins P50,000.

"They only give prizes to the top three in the individual category this year," noted Domingo whose team remained close to 24 minutes ahead of the second-running Beer na Beer. He is also on top of the sprints race after winning 11 intermediate sprints so far.

Tanguilig, the PLDT captain who placed fourth last year, is expected to bid for the yellow jersey in today's ninth stage that will include a major climb through Dalton Pass on the way to Nueva Vizcaya.

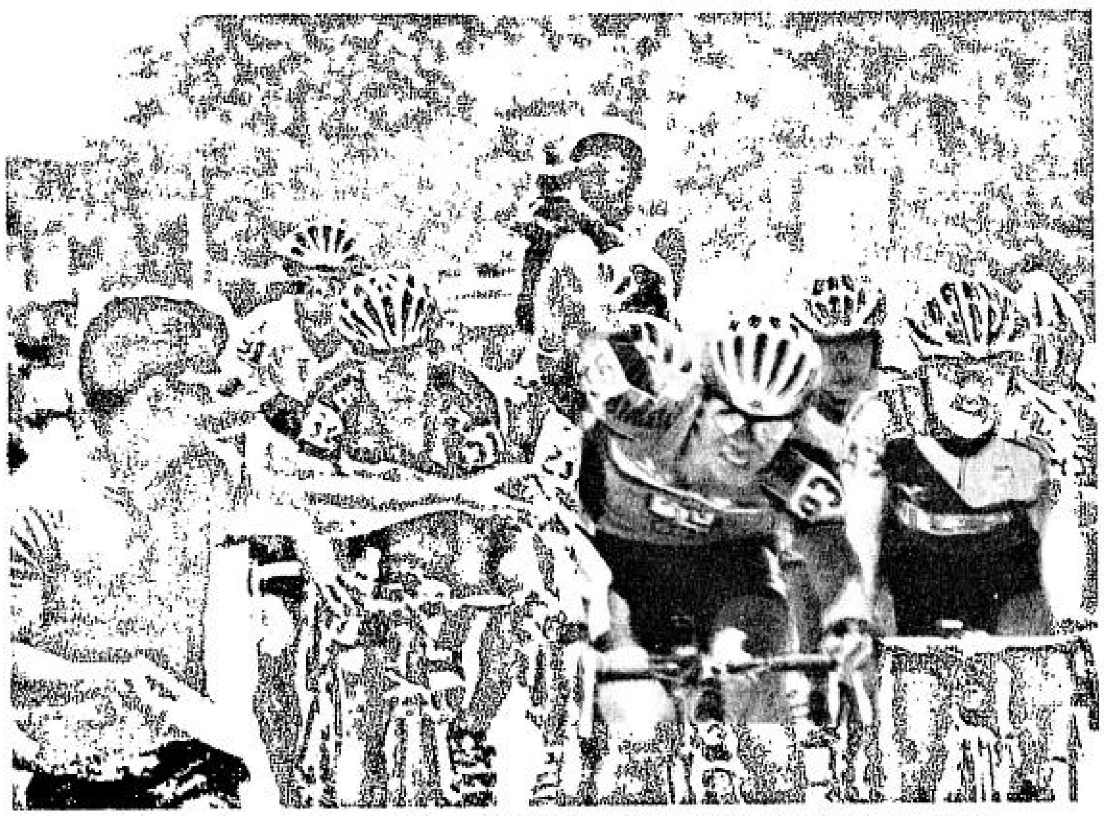
That's bad news for Domingo, who had difficulty defending the jersey in uphill stages many times in the past.

"I'm not worried," said Domingo in Filipino. "In fact, I don't think about it at all."

Calderon said he was egged on by his townsfolk while passing Barangay Lennec in his hometown.

"*Kaya nga, sir, pinangatawanan ko na ang pagpadyak*, (That's why I decided to go all out for the win)," said Calderon, who was welcomed by wife Belinda and 2-year-old son Jake at the capitol of Nueva Ecija.

Sponsoring this year's Tour are Pharex, Red Bull, Gatorade, Lactovitale, Summit and Isuzu.



A BOTTLE of water shoved at Joseph Milanes (93) by a team supporter slows a pack that includes Domingo (91), Tanguilig (31), Villanueva (45) and stage winner Calderon (third from right). ROMY HOMILLADA

Rhum Riders still upbeat despite odds

CABANATUAN—While the breaks have not gone their way early in the Air21 Tour Pilipinas 2004, the Tanduay Rhum Riders remain upbeat with the crowd rallying behind them because of their never-say-die spirit.

After the flu-stricken Arnel Quirimit conceded defeat in defense of his individual championship, the Rhum Riders found themselves in a very deep hole.

From last place Tuesday, Tanduay gained some ground, finishing third in the race to climb two places in the standings to 10th.

"This team continues to ride with a lot of fighting heart," said Tanduay delegation head Larry Li.

Dalton Pass tests KOM front-runners

THE CLIMBERS again take centerstage in today's ninth stage as one of the acid tests in the Summit Water King of the Mountain (KOM) race awaits the field at the dreaded Dalton Pass, that mountain road linking Central Luzon and Cagayan Valley.

"It's going to be more exciting from here on in," said Sophia Aberin, product manager of Summit, the official drinking water of the Tour Pilipinas 2004.

Summit, the country's leading natural drinking water, and Beer Na Beer, two foremost Asia Brewery Inc. products, are involved in the ongoing Tour with the latter making waves in Thursday's eighth stage from Dagupan City to Cabanatuan City through Joel Calderon's stage victory.

In today's 145-km grind from Cabanatuan City to Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, Lloyd Reynante and Albert Primero will battle it out to keep the lead in the Summit Water KOM although erstwhile front-runners Frederick Feliciano and Eusebio Quiñones will be out to spoil their bids.

The Summit Water KOM race offers P50,000 to the winner at the end of the 17-stage Tour on May 2.

RP cage tryouts reach final phase

THE Cebuana Lhuillier Tryouts ng Bayan, a country-wide search for basketball talents, enters its final phase tonight at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Twelve aspirants from Metro Manila, who made it to the final tryouts, will be joined by four survivors from Northern Luzon and seven from the Visayas and Mindanao sojourns conducted by the coaching staff headed by Dong Vergeire and Boyzie Zamar.

Chosen from Metro Manila were 6-foot-4 Rolly Menor, a former national and MBA player; 6-4 Don Villamin of Sunkist-UST; 6-4 Unice Reyes and 5-10 Tius mendoza of College of St. Benilde; former national team member Lot Soriano of PCU, Adamson's Mark Abadia, PBA draftee Timothy Hawkins Jr., UE and PBL cager Rey Mendez, Cebuano Nico Sanico, Joel Co, Sunkist's Charles Tan and 6-4 Fil-Australian Richard Michael.

They will be pitting skills against discoveries Dale Caparas, Rainward Ramos, Miguel Pacheco, Joseph Guanco, Wilbert Sayson and Joel Lamitan from Cebu; Ricimar Perturbos from Cagayan de Oro, Fil-Nigerian Sammy Ayodele and Jayson Tiogson from Baguio and Ephraim Torio from Pangasinan.

"We have a good mix of young and veteran players, we were able to get good big men too. This should be a good national team," said Vergeire.

Holdovers from the RP-Cebuana-Lhuillier team that won the SEA Games title last year are Celino Cruz, Dennis Madrid, Ricky Calimag and Richie Melencio, while University of Mindanao's 6-9 Samigue Eman and 6-3 Eder John Sadua and Cebuanos Jerry Cavan and Jay-R Gerilla have been assured of slots in the 20-man pool due to their impressive performance in the regional tryouts.

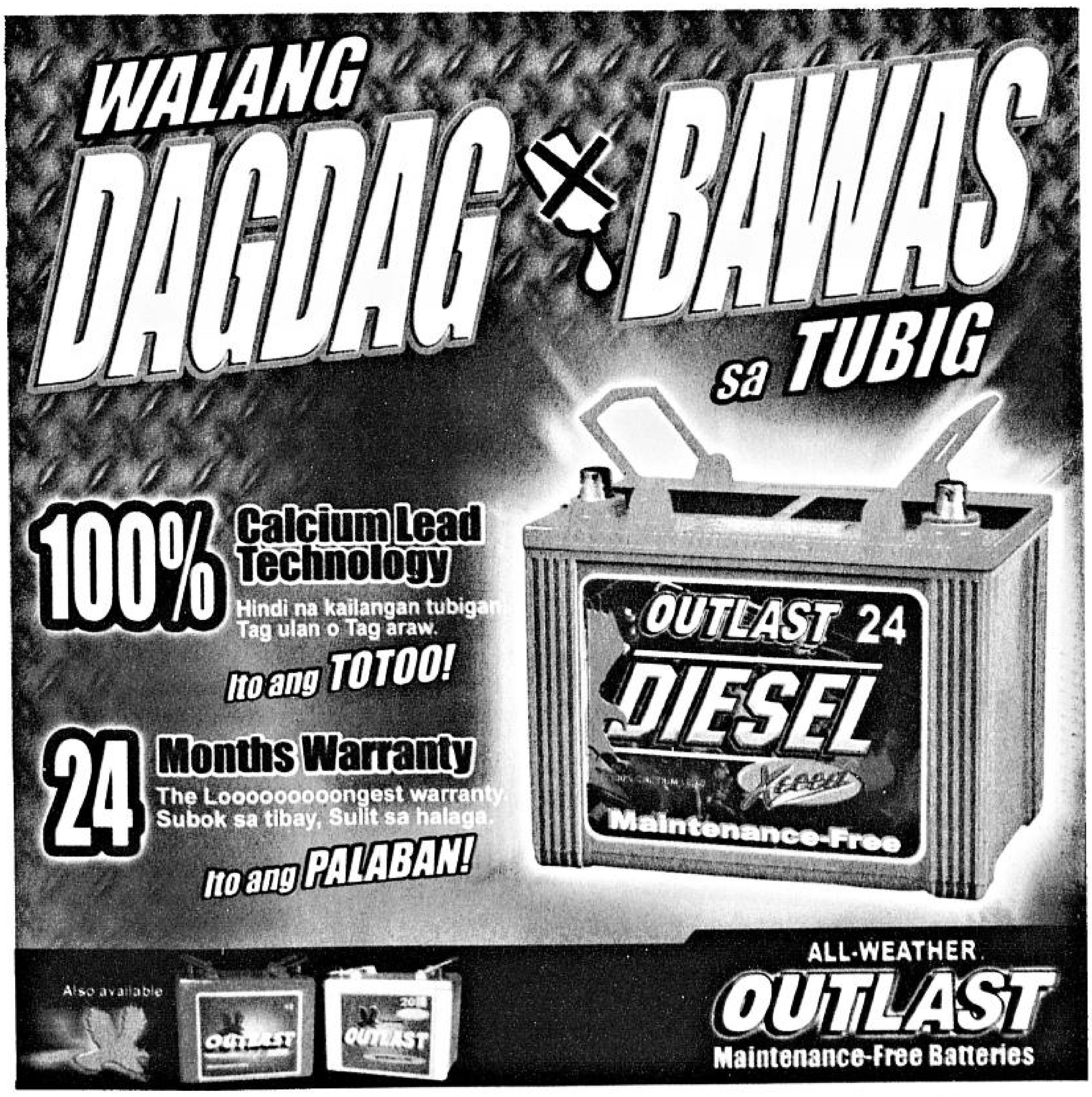
Mariano stuns GM

FILIPINO International Master Nelson Mariano II upset 13th seed Grandmaster Ashot Anastasian (Elo 2587) of Armenia to raise his total to a perfect 3 points and share the lead in the tough 6th Dubai Open Chess Championship at the Dubai Chess and Culture Club.

Mariano (Elo 2416), was tied with top seed Super GM Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu (Elo 2692) of Romania, third seed Super GM Shakriyar Mamedyarov (Elo 2657) of Azerbaijan and 28th seed GM Tamaz Gelashvili (Elo 2542) of Georgia after Wednesday's round.

The 30-year-old Mariano will handle white against Mamedyarov, who outplayed 24th seed GM Merab Gagunashvili (Elo 2562) of Georgia.

IM Barlo Nadera settled for a draw with GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly of India and landed in the group of 2.5 pointers. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*



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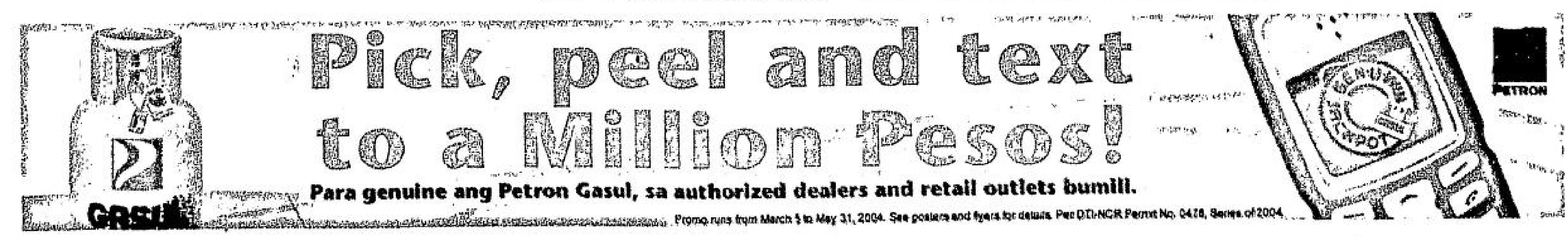

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PSC puts emphasis on Olympic funding

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Angeles first won over Kyrygzstan's Natalya Muhamedgarreva, 15-9, to advance to the top 16 before running into Sugawara.

"She did very well, considering that she's one of the newer members of the national team," said Gejo Jimenez, Philippine Amateur Fencing Association secretary general.

Filipinos Mickey Mancenido, Roberta Gonzales, Emerson Segui, Ruperto Endriano, and Ronald Canlas Jr. were eliminated right in their first matches while Ramil Endriano bowed out in his second assignment.

Kim Won-jin of Korea and Tan Li of China won the men's and women's foil.

The individual sabre begins today with RP bet Wally Mendoza expected to bounce back from a humbling defeat in the Asian qualifier.

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16. R. Galdonez (Mail and More) 6:27 mins

17. V. Baluyot (Samsung) 6:30 mins; 18. A. Catalan (Marsman Drysdale) 19. B. Llentada (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 20. R. Hualda (Purefoods) 21. J. Ricafort (Purefoods) 22. R. Dolosa (Metro Drug) 23. R. Navarro (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 24. D. Tacutacu (Purefoods) 25. J. Guillen (Samsung) 26. D. Posillero (Patrol 117) 27. V. Muena (Marsman Drysdale) 28. R. Villaver (Metro Drug) 29. T. Martinez (Beer na Beer) 30. D. Cagas (Dole) 31. E. Atilano (Mail and More) 32. O. Fronda (Mail and More) 33. V. Quintia (Metro Drug) 34. O. Rendole (Patrol 117) 35. B. Lopez Jr. (PLDT) 36. J. Garcia (Vat Riders) 37. M. Primero (Dole) 38. S. Barnachea (Mail and More) 39. G. Apolinar (Postmen) same time

STAGE 8 OVERALL INDIVIDUAL

11. C. Felix (Vat Riders) 16:32 mins behind

12. E. Feliciano (Patrol 117) 17:02 mins

13. V. Baluyot (Samsung) 18:19

14. R. Gorantes (Metro Drug) 18:20

15. B. Ravina (Vat Riders) 18:24

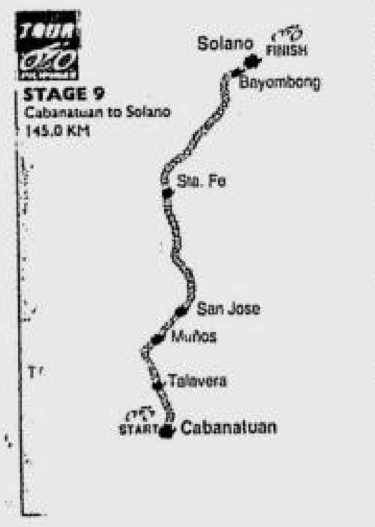
16. D. Ganigan (Vat Riders) 20:12

17. R. Navarro (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 21:12

18. O. Fronda (Mail and More) 22:52

19. E. Obosa (Samsung) 24:12

20. A. Marcelo (Mail and More) 24:20



Welcoat repulses Hapee five in OT

By Trina Ibarle

CHESTER Tolomia hit back-to-back triples at crunch-time to power pacesetter Welcoat Paints to a 78-73 overtime victory over defending champion Hapee Toothpaste yesterday in the 2004 PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

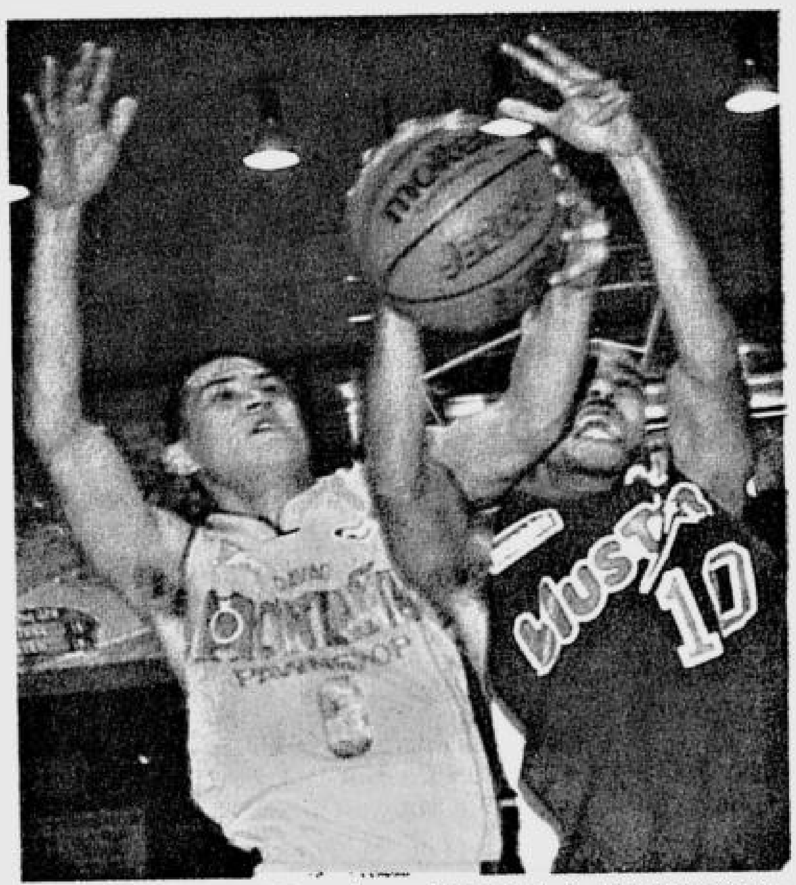
Tolomia's treys enabled the Paintmasters to raze a 71-69 deficit and eventually lift them to their fifth straight win.

The Teeth Sparklers, who rallied from 10 points down to force the extension through three straight triples by Emerson Oreta, dropped to their second loss in five games.

Tolomia, who returned to the Paintmasters' fold after a brief stint in the PBA, wound up with 22 points, behind the 23 of fellow former pro Jercules Tangkay.

Earlier, Viva Mineral Water showed its defensive prowess in scoring a come-from-behind 88-81 triumph over Sunkist-UST.

The Water Force, who trailed by as many as 15 points late in the second quarter, protected an 83-81 lead by preventing the Tigers from scoring in their last five possessions to improve their second-running standing to 5-1.



AL Magpayo of Montaña Pawnshop and Mark Victoria of Blu Star dispute the rebound in their game Tuesday. Blu Star prevailed. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

The scores:

First Game

VIVA MINERAL WATER 88—Santos 18, Jones 12, Ybanez 11, Miranda 11, Isip 9, Catli 8, Co 7, Rizada 6, Raneses 4, Misolas 2, Sison 0.

SUNKIST-UST 81—Vizcarra 15, Compton 14, Luanzon 12, Latoreno 10, Coronel 10, Hubalde 7, Capati 7, Santos 4, Paterno 2, Patrimonio 0.

Quarters: 16-22, 38-51, 64-62, 88-81.

Second Game

WELCOAT 78—Tangkay 23, Tolomia 22, Aldeguer 10, Gatumbato 8, Ortiguerra 6, Uy 5, Capus 3, Reyes 0, Guevarra 0.

HAPEE 73—Oreta 16, Mercado 14, Macapagal 12, Juntilla 7, Moore 7, Dy 6, Mendoza 6, Tan 3, Napa 0.

Quarters: 11-19, 30-31, 47-45, 67-67, 78-73.

Superals join RP's jungolf campaign

WOLEN Superal and his sisters Crystal Faith and Princess all made it to the country's team to the Callaway Junior World championships in San Diego, California, after crushing the opposition in the Samsung-sponsored national qualifier at the Sherwood Hills and Riviera executive courses.

Superal capped his unchallenged victory in boys' Class C (11-12 years) with a one-under-par 71 for a 34-stroke victory. He earned a chance to make up for last year's sorry miss in the Junior World where he led after two rounds only to collapse on the last day.

His sisters also qualified with Princess closing out with an 82-237 to rule the girls' Class B by 14 while young Princess earned a 27-shot win with her 75-215.

The stars of last year's campaign will also be back to spearhead the contingent as Jayvie Agojo, Dottie Ardina and Miguel Tabuena powered their way to easy victories in the tourney serving as the third leg of the Samsung Philippine Junior Golf Tour and given major backing by International Container Terminal Services Inc.

Agojo fired a one-over 73 for the girls' Class A plum, Ardina shot a 68 to win by 26 strokes in girls' Class D while Tabuena ruled Class D by 14 shots.

Miko Yee pulled off a shock win in boys' Class B, Cyna Rodriguez emerged as the new Class C bet while JR Gonzales reclaimed his title in Class E to join the qualifiers.

SPORTSWATCH

Bautista knocks out IBF champ

TEENER Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista stunned reigning IBF Pan Pacific superfly champion Hengky Wuwungan with a technical knockout win in the third round of their scheduled 10-round fight in Indonesia Tuesday night. The 17-year-old Bautista, a native of Candijay, Bohol now fighting out of the ALA Gym of Cebuano sportsman Tony Aldeguer, dominated the Indon champ, who took a barrage of punches until the referee stopped the bout at the one minute mark of the third round. The win was the sixth in eight bouts for the unbeaten Bautista, who is now being geared for a May 29 fight against a Korean. Aldeguer, who accompanied Bautista along with trainer Edito "Ala" Villamor, had earlier told the media that he was unfazed by Wuwungan's credentials (21-1). *Salven L. Lagumbay*

PPBL moves up to junior bantam

THE PHILIPPINE Pro-Boxing League (PPBL) moves up to the junior bantamweight level with a couple of semifinal bouts at the Mandaluyong City Gym today. RP junior bantamweight champion Eric Barcelona fights Mark Sales in the featured bout, while PBF 115-lb champ Roselito Campana takes on second-ranked Sherwin Paro in the companion mainer. The PPBL, a unique stepladder tournament supported by Tanduay Rhum and Lactovitale, is shown every Wednesday at 9 p.m. on IBC 13. In his previous win, the 22-year-old Barcelona stamped his class over Robert Dalisay.

Kill Droga pool finals in Aklan

TOP billiards stars share in the fight against illegal drugs with the grand finals today of the "Karambolahan sa Aklan," a 9-ball competition initiated by the Kill Droga Visayas Chapter under P/Deputy Director General (Ret.) Efren Quimpo Fernandez. Veteran internationalist Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat has agreed to grace the occasion to help deliver the anti-drug message. Main invited guest Efren "Bata" Reyes expressed regrets he could not attend the affair but assured organizers he will always be with them in fighting drug addiction. Luat, a semifinalist in the 2000 Cardiff World Pool Championship, will play exhibition matches and help in the awarding ceremonies of the well-participated province-wide competition.

Search for next racing superstar is on

THE FIRST stage of the C! Top Driver Challenge "Search for the Next Racing Superstar," a four-stage reality-based quest, has begun with competitions at the Trans Sport Show 2004 at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall B. The search is being held in cooperation with Ford Philippines and Tuason Racing School. The first of four stages is The Gran Turismo Video Game Challenge, a game popular among world-class racing drivers who need to sharpen their reflexes. Entrance fee for the Gran Turismo Challenge is P150.

Nat'l bouldering circuit set at SM

THE EMERGING extreme sport of bouldering goes national starting April 24 at SM North Edsa with the staging of the first leg of the Sports Climbing Association of the Philippines (Scapi) series. Bouldering, a variation of the speed wall climbing, requires climbers to solve hold patterns on a 16-foot high climbing wall but without the use of a safety harness. A padded cushion is laid underneath for climbers to fall on. "Last year, we only had one national bouldering championship (won by Kristian Guerrero and Ina Flores), but this year, Scapi decided to make it truly national by holding legs in Visayas and Mindanao. We are looking at Bacolod and Davao City as possible venues for the next legs," said Joey Cuerdo, who is organizing the event sponsored by Victorinox Swiss Army Knives and SM Malls. He noted that Filipino sports climbers have done well in international competitions like the Asian X Games, where Guerrero reached the final early this year.

Pasay 4-cock derby today

MORE than 70 fights are on tap when the "4-Cock Derby Para sa May Kapansanan" gets underway starting at 4 p.m. today at the Pasay City Cockpit. A cash prize of P300,000 is at stake in the derby sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite Free, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Complexor 3000, according to PCC pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano. Dela Rosa said members of Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) are also taking part in the cockfest, proceeds of which will be donated to the Elsie Gatches Foundation of Alabang. Meanwhile, big-time cockers are invited to vie in another 4-cock derby hosted by cocker Benjie Lim on April 30. For inquiries, call 843-1746, 843-1890 and 816-6750.

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Golf's new hero

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

YOU are down nine strokes going to the final round. And then you emerge victorious after the smoke of battle has cleared.

What does that make of you?

Superman?

Perhaps. For, how can one best describe the recent victory of Stewart Cink in the Heritage Classic that had a whopping total prize of $4.5 million?

Look, this is no ordinary golf tournament. This is part of the USPGA, the world's No. 1 factory of the greatest players of the sport. Virtually all the stars of the game were there, including 2004 Masters runner-up and two-time US Open champion Ernie Els (69-70-68-69), who finished two strokes behind Cink.

Cink was never considered a contender. He was nine off leader Ted Purdy and three off Ernie Els with one round left.

Cink shot a final-day 64 to Purdy's 73 and forged a playoff. Cink, who earlier did 72-69-69, won it on the fifth hole on a five-foot birdie.

"Steward Cink shooting seven-under today, man, give me a break," said Purdy. "That was pretty good."

Cink's victory was the greatest ever comeback in the PGA, surpassing the old mark of eight strokes overhauled in a US men's event.

The only greatest rally better than Cink's feat that is recognized by the US Tour is Scotsman Paul Lawrie's win from 10 strokes down in the 1999 British Open. It was also a playoff win, after Frenchman Jean Van de Velde's bizarre 72nd-hole collapse.

Before Cink's feat, the previous great comebacks include the victory in the 1956 Masters by Jack Burke and the win in the B.C. Open last year by Craig Staedler.

Seemingly, Cink was meant to win it.

Purdy finished his final nine holes uncharacteristically without a birdie, bogeying 10th and 15th. Purdy had the chance to win it outright on the final regulation hole, but he missed a 10-foot birdie to sign for his 73 after previous rounds of 69-67-65. He had pulled his putt.

"I hated the way I was playing today, just because I was trying to make pars," said Purdy. "That's not any fun."

Way to lose.

In short, Purdy had played defensively on the last day. He was trying more to protect his huge lead than to win the tournament. Truly, that was no fun.

It happens that at times, in this crazy game of golf, we tend to be too cautious when we feel victory is almost at hand. We become conservative instead of being aggressive as was our game plan the day before, or in the early goings if the contest was set for 18 holes.

The correct attitude should always be that we play our normal game all throughout, sticking to a set offensive, whether we are comfortably ahead of the pack or just ahead by a whisker. Changing tactics or strategy in the course of the game could prove disastrous, as in it's bad to change horses in midstream as the cliché goes.

Tom Purdy had said it himself: "I was just trying to make pars."

That backfired as manifesred by his two bogeys coming home. When he needed to sink the winning birdie—a "makeable" 10-footer on his 72nd hole—the gods of golf balked, as if telling the American ranked 366th in the world: "You are not worthy of the crown."

In winning his third career PGA title, his first since winning the same event in 2000, Cink pocketed $864,000, moving him into the Top 10 on the money list with more than $1.5 million this year.

Cink, No. 43 in the world, has suddenly thrust himself as the new hero among golf's resurrected from the dead.

The unsinkable one, I must say.

***

FASTBREAK. If you still don't have tickets for the URCC (Universal Reality Combat Championship) event tomorrow, April 24, at the Casino Filipino Amphitheater in Parañaque City, you can purchase them at Red Corner (tel. 8678059) and Karsten Productions (7213749 or 7216809). Hurry up. Heard there are only a few tickets left.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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9. A. Primero (Dole) 6:21 mins; 10. M. Robosa (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 11. G. Bergonio (Samsung) 12. B. Ravina (Vat Riders) 13. F. Obosa (Samsung) 14. D. Hardin (Postmen) 15. C. Felix (Vat Riders) same time

16. R. Galdonez (Mail and More) 6:27 mins

17. V. Baluyot (Samsung) 6:30 mins; 18. A. Catalan (Marsman Drysdale) 19. B. Llentada (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 20. R. Hualda (Purefoods) 21. J. Ricafort (Purefoods) 22. R. Dolosa (Metro Drug) 23. R. Navarro (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 24. D. Tacutacu (Purefoods) 25. J. Guillen (Samsung) 26. D. Posillero (Patrol 117) 27. V. Muena (Marsman Drysdale) 28. R. Villaver (Metro Drug) 29. T. Martinez (Beer na Beer) 30. D. Cagas (Dole) 31. E. Atilano (Mail and More) 32. O. Fronda (Mail and More) 33. V. Quintia (Metro Drug) 34. O. Rendole (Patrol 117) 35. B. Lopez Jr. (PLDT) 36. J. Garcia (Vat Riders) 37. M. Primero (Dole) 38. S. Barnachea (Mail and More) 39. G. Apolinar (Postmen) same time

STAGE 8 OVERALL INDIVIDUAL

11. C. Felix (Vat Riders) 16:32 mins behind

12. E. Feliciano (Patrol 11[illegible]) [illegible]7:02 mins

13. V. Baluyot (Samsung) 18:19

14. R. Gorantes (Metro Drug) 18:2[illegible]

15. B. Ravina (Vat Riders) 18:24

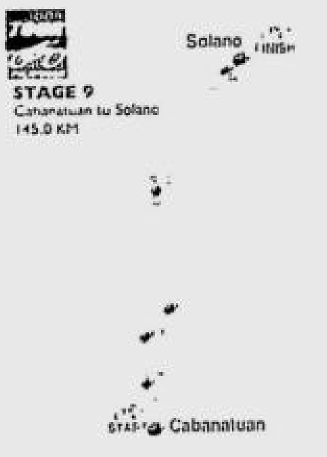
16. D. Garugan (Vat Riders) 20:1[illegible]

17. R. Navarro (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 21:1[illegible]

18. O. Fronda (Mail and More) 22:52

19. F. Obosa (Samsung) 24:1[illegible]

20. A. Marcelo (Mail and More) 24:2[illegible]



Welcoat repulses Hapee five in OT

By Trina Ibarle

CHESTER Tolomia hit back-to-back triples at crunch-time to power pacesetter Welcoat Paints to a 78-73 overtime victory over defending champion Hapee Toothpaste yesterday in the 2004 PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

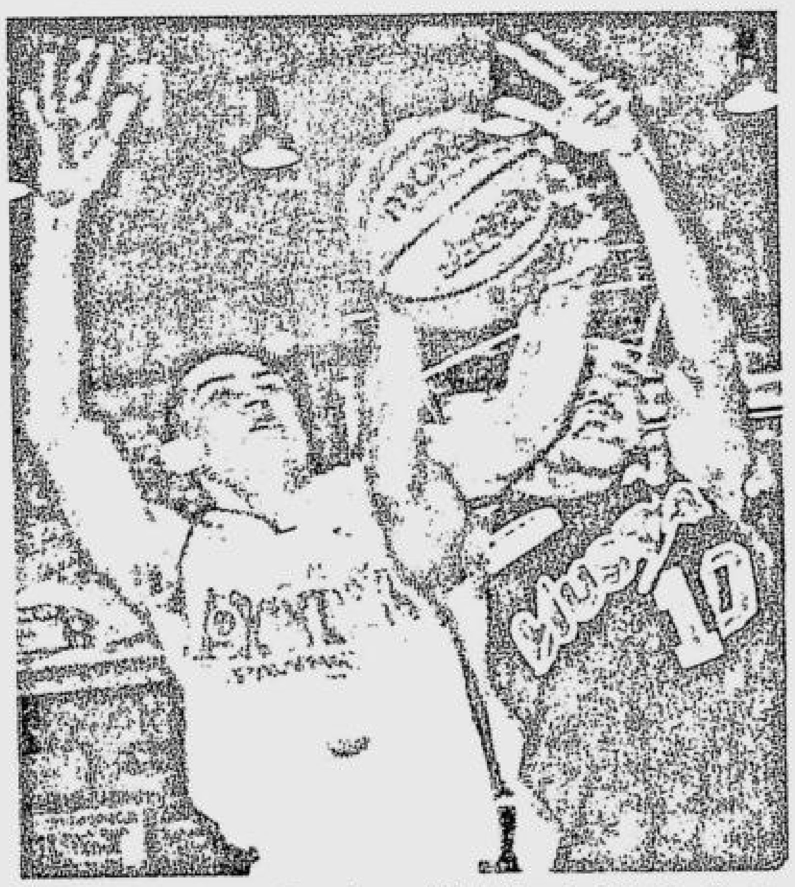
Tolomia's treys enabled the Paintmasters to raze a 71-69 deficit and eventually lift them to their fifth straight win.

The Teeth Sparklers, who rallied from 10 points down to force the extension through three straight triples by Emerson Oreta, dropped to their second loss in five games.

Tolomia, who returned to the Paintmasters' fold after a brief stint in the PBA, wound up with 22 points, behind the 23 of fellow former pro Jercules Tangkay.

Earlier, Viva Mineral Water showed its defensive prowess in scoring a come-from-behind 88-81 triumph over Sunkist-UST.

The Water Force, who trailed by as many as 15 points late in the second quarter, protected an 83-81 lead by preventing the Tigers from scoring in their last five possessions to improve their second-running standing to 5-1.



AL Magpayo of Montana Pawnshop and Mark Victoria of Blu Star dispute the rebound in their game Tuesday. Blu Star prevailed. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

The scores:

First Game

VIVA MINERAL WATER 88— Santo[illegible] [illegible], Miranda 11, Isip 9, Calli 8, [illegible] Rizada 6, Raneses 4, Misolas 2, Sison 0.

SUNKIST-UST 81— [illegible] 15, Compton [illegible] 12 [illegible] Coronel 10; [illegible] Santos 4, Paterno 2, Pan[illegible].

Quarters: [illegible] 64-62, 88-81

Second Game

WELCOAT 78—Tangkay 23, Tolomia 22, Aldeguer 10, Gatumbato 8, Ortiguerra 6, Uy 5, Capus 3, Reyes 0, Guevarra 0.

HAPEE 73—Oreta 16, Mercado 14, Macapagal 12, [illegible]ntilla 7, Moore 7, Dy 6, Mendoza 6, Tan 3, Napa 0.

Quarters: 11-19, 30-31, 47-45, 67-67, 78-73.

Superals join RP's jungolf campaign

WOLEN Superal and his sisters Crystal Faith and Princess all made it to the country's team to the Callaway Junior World championships in San Diego, California, after crushing the opposition in the Samsung-sponsored national qualifier at the Sherwood Hills and Riviera executive courses.

Superal capped his unchallenged victory in boys Class C (11-12 years) with a one-under-par 71 for a 34-stroke victory. He earned a chance to make up for last year's sorry miss in the Junior World where he led after two rounds only to collapse on the last day.

His sisters also qualified with Princess closing out with an 82-237 to rule the girls' Class B by 14 while young Princess earned a 27-shot win with her 75-215.

The stars of last year's campaign will also be back to spearhead the contingent as Jayvie Agojo, Dottie Ardina and Miguel Tabuena powered their way to easy victories in the tourney serving as the third leg of the Samsung Philippine Junior Golf Tour and given major backing by International Container Terminal Services Inc.

Agojo fired a one-over 73 for the girls' Class A plum, Ardina shot a 68 to win by 26 strokes in girls' Class D while Tabuena ruled Class D by 14 shots.

Miko Yee pulled off a shock win in boys' Class B, Cyna Rodriguez emerged as the new Class C bet while JR Gonzales reclaimed his title in Class E to join the qualifiers.

SPORTSWATCH

Bautista knocks out IBF champ

TEENER Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista stunned reigning IBF Pan Pacific superfly champion Hengky Wuwungan with a technical knockout win in the third round of their scheduled 10-round fight in Indonesia Tuesday night. The 17-year-old Bautista, a native of Candijay, Bohol now fighting out of the ALA Gym of Cebuano sportsman Tony Aldeguer, dominated the Indon champ, who took a barrage of punches until the referee stopped the bout at the one minute mark of the third round. The win was the sixth in eight bouts for the unbeaten Bautista, who is now being geared for a May 29 fight against a Korean. Aldeguer, who accompanied Bautista along with trainer Edito "Ala" Villamor, had earlier told the media that he was unfazed by Wuwungan's credentials (21-1). *Salven L. Lagumbay*

PPBL moves up to junior bantam

THE PHILIPPINE Pro-Boxing League (PPBL) moves up to the junior bantamweight level with a couple of semifinal bouts at the Mandaluyong City Gym today. RP junior bantamweight champion Eric Barcelona fights Mark Sales in the featured bout, while PBF 115-lb champ Roselito Campana takes on second-ranked Sherwin Paro in the companion mainer. The PPBL, a unique stepladder tournament supported by Tanduay Rhum and Lactovitale, is shown every Wednesday at 9 p.m. on IBC 13. In his previous win, the 22-year-old Barcelona stamped his class over Robert Dalisay.

Kill Droga pool finals in Aklan

TOP billiards stars share in the fight against illegal drugs with the grand finals today of the "Karambolahan sa Aklan," a 9-ball competition initiated by the Kill Droga Visayas Chapter under P/Deputy Director General (Ret.) Efren Quimpo Fernandez. Veteran internationalist Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat has agreed to grace the occasion to help deliver the anti-drug message. Main invited guest Efren "Bata" Reyes expressed regrets he could not attend the affair but assured organizers he will always be with them in fighting drug addiction. Luat, a semifinalist in the 2000 Cardiff World Pool Championship, will play exhibition matches and help in the awarding ceremonies of the well-participated province-wide competition.

Search for next racing superstar is on

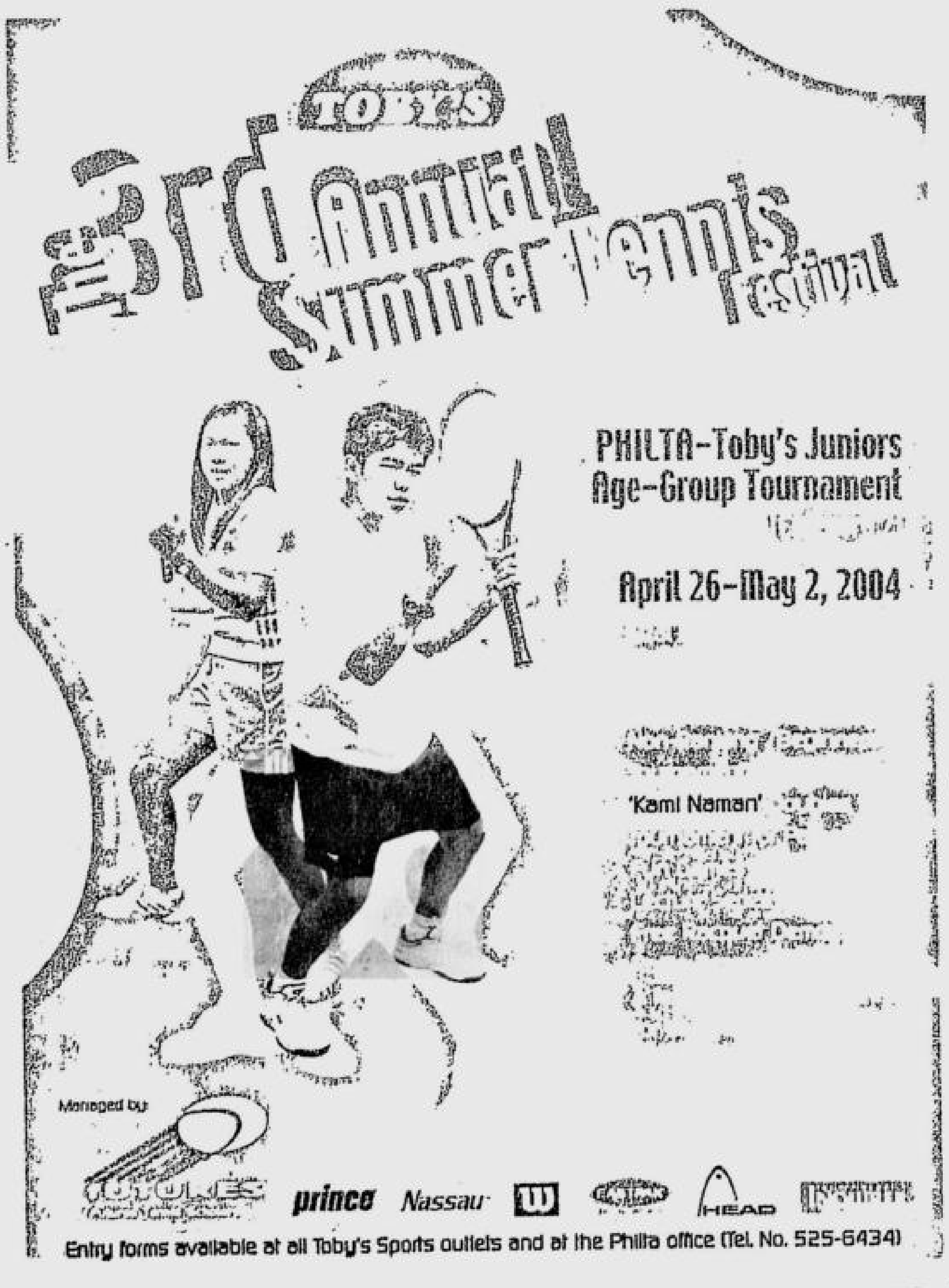
THE FIRST stage of the C! Top Driver Challenge "Search for the Next Racing Superstar," a four-stage reality-based quest, has begun with competitions at the Trans Sport Show 2004 at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall B. The search is being held in cooperation with Ford Philippines and Tuason Racing School. The first of four stages is The Gran Turismo Video Game Challenge, a game popular among world-class racing drivers who need to sharpen their reflexes. Entrance fee for the Gran Turismo Challenge is P150.

Nat'l bouldering circuit set at SM

THE EMERGING extreme sport of bouldering goes national starting April 24 at SM North Edsa with the staging of the first leg of the Sports Climbing Association of the Philippines (Scapi) series. Bouldering, a variation of the speed wall climbing, requires climbers to solve hold patterns on a 16-foot high climbing wall but without the use of a safety harness. A padded cushion is laid underneath for climbers to fall on. "Last year, we only had one national bouldering championship (won by Kristian Guerrero and Ina Flores), but this year, Scapi decided to make it truly national by holding legs in Visayas and Mindanao. We are looking at Bacolod and Davao City as possible venues for the next legs," said Joey Cuerdo, who is organizing the event sponsored by Victorinox Swiss Army Knives and SM Malls. He noted that Filipino sports climbers have done well in international competitions like the Asian X Games, where Guerrero reached the final early this year.

Pasay 4-cock derby today

MORE than 70 fights are on tap when the "4-Cock Derby Para sa May Kapansanan" gets underway starting at 4 p.m. today at the Pasay City Cockpit. A cash prize of P300,000 is at stake in the derby sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite Free, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Complexor 3000, according to PCC pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano. Dela Rosa said members of Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) are also taking part in the cockfest, proceeds of which will be donated to the Elsie Gatches Foundation of Alabang. Meanwhile, big-time cockers are invited to vie in another 4-cock derby hosted by cocker Benjie Lim on April 30. For inquiries, call 843-1746, 843-1890 and 816-6750.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Golf's new hero

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

YOU are down nine strokes going to the final round. And then you emerge victorious after the smoke of battle has cleared.

What does that make of you?

Superman?

Perhaps. For, how can one best describe the recent victory of Stewart Cink in the Heritage Classic that had a whopping total prize of $4.5 million?

Look, this is no ordinary golf tournament. This is part of the USPGA, the world's No. 1 factory of the greatest players of the sport. Virtually all the stars of the game were there, including 2004 Masters runner-up and two-time US Open champion Ernie Els (69-70-68-69), who finished two strokes behind Cink.

Cink was never considered a contender. He was nine off leader Ted Purdy and three off Ernie Els with one round left.

Cink shot a final-day 64 to Purdy's 73 and forged a playoff. Cink, who earlier did 72-69-69, won it on the fifth hole on a five-foot birdie.

"Steward Cink shooting seven-under today, man, give me a break," said Purdy. "That was pretty good."

Cink's victory was the greatest ever comeback in the PGA, surpassing the old mark of eight strokes overhauled in a US men's event.

The only greatest rally better than Cink's feat that is recognized by the US Tour is Scotsman Paul Lawrie's win from 10 strokes down in the 1999 British Open. It was also a playoff win, after Frenchman Jean Van de Velde's bizarre 72nd-hole collapse.

Before Cink's feat, the previous great comebacks include the victory in the 1956 Masters by Jack Burke and the win in the B.C. Open last year by Craig Staedler.

Seemingly, Cink was meant to win it.

Purdy finished his final nine holes uncharacteristically without a birdie, bogeying 10th and 15th. Purdy had the chance to win it outright on the final regulation hole, but he missed a 10-foot birdie to sign for his 73 after previous rounds of 69-67-65. He had pulled his putt.

"I hated the way I was playing today, just because I was trying to make pars," said Purdy. "That's no any fun."

Way to lose

In short, Purdy had played c[illegible]sively on the last day. He was trying more to protect his huge lead than to win the tournament. Truly, that was no fun.

It happens that at times in this crazy game of golf, we tend to be too cautious when we feel victory is almost at hand. We become conservative instead of being aggressive as was our game plan the day before or in the early goings [illegible] the [illegible] was set for 18 holes.

The correct attitude should always be that we play our normal game all throughout, sticking to a set offensive, whether we are comfortably ahead of the pack or just ahead by a whisker. Changing tactics or strategy in the course of the game could prove disastrous, as in it's bad to change horses in midstream as the cliché goes.

Tom Purdy had said it himself: "I was just trying to make pars."

That backfired as manifested by his two bogeys coming home. When he needed to sink the winning birdie—a "makeable" 10-footer on his 72nd hole—the gods of golf balked, as if telling the American ranked 366th in the world: "You are not worthy of the crown."

In winning [illegible]'s third career PGA title, his first since winning the same event in 2000, Cink pocketed $864,000, moving him into the Top 10 on the money list with more than $1.5 million this year.

Cink, No. 43 in the world, has suddenly thrust [illegible] as the new hero among golf [illegible] resurrected from the dead.

Th[illegible], I must say.

FASTBREAK. If you [illegible] don't have tickets for the URCC (Universal Reality Combat Championship) event tomorrow, April 24 at the Casino Filipino Amphitheater [illegible] Paranaque City, you can purchase them at Red Corner (tel [illegible]) and Karsten Produ[illegible] [illegible] 213749 or [illegible]21680[illegible] Hurry up. Heard there are only [illegible] tickets left.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Sprewell sparkles

SPREWELL reacts to an offensive foul in the fourth period. AFP

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota —Kevin Garnett produced his third career post-season triple-double and Latrell Sprewell added 31 points Wednesday as Minnesota beat Denver, 95-81, in the National Basketball Association playoffs.

Sprewell made a franchise-record seven 3-pointers as the top-seeded Timberwolves again dusted the eighth-seeded Nuggets to open a 2-0 lead in their Western Conference first-round series. The Timberwolves are now halfway toward the first playoff series win in franchise history.

Again in a supporting role, Garnett had 20 points, 22 rebounds and 10 assists for his third career playoff triple-double. He also backstopped a defense that held the Nuggets to nine points in the second quarter.

In Miami, defense was key as the Heat set a club record for fewest points allowed in a playoff game, stifling Baron Davis and the rest of the New Orleans Hornets in a 93-63 victory.

Miami took a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference series, a first for the Heat in a best-of-seven playoff series.

The Heat limited the Hornets to 24.4-percent (20-of-82) shooting, just off the record-low 23.3-percent effort by Golden State against the Los Angeles Lakers on April 21, 1973.

The Hornets managed 20 baskets —the second-lowest total in playoff history. Portland had 19 baskets against San Antonio on June 4, 1999. *AFP*

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Asian F3 roars off

RACING action at its best returns as the country's ace drivers take centerstage anew in the kickoff of the 2004 Addict Mobile Formula 3 Super Prix this weekend at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas.

Defending champion Pepon Marave sees rough sailing in his bid for a back-to-back Asian Formula 3 crown as he teams up with Australian driver Christian Jones under the Shell-Kinetic Racing banner.

Mark Goddard of Castrol Team Goddard-Minardi Team Asia is also gunning to regain the crown he held two years in a row together with Tyson Sy in this event sponsored by Denso and Yokohama.

Out to stop them in this series also supported by NU 107 FM, Manila Bulletin, Department of Tourism, PLDT My DSL and Standard Insurance are the duo of Jojo Silverio and Roland Hermoso, the pair of Richard Joson and Japanese Kenkou Miura and Enzo Pastor.

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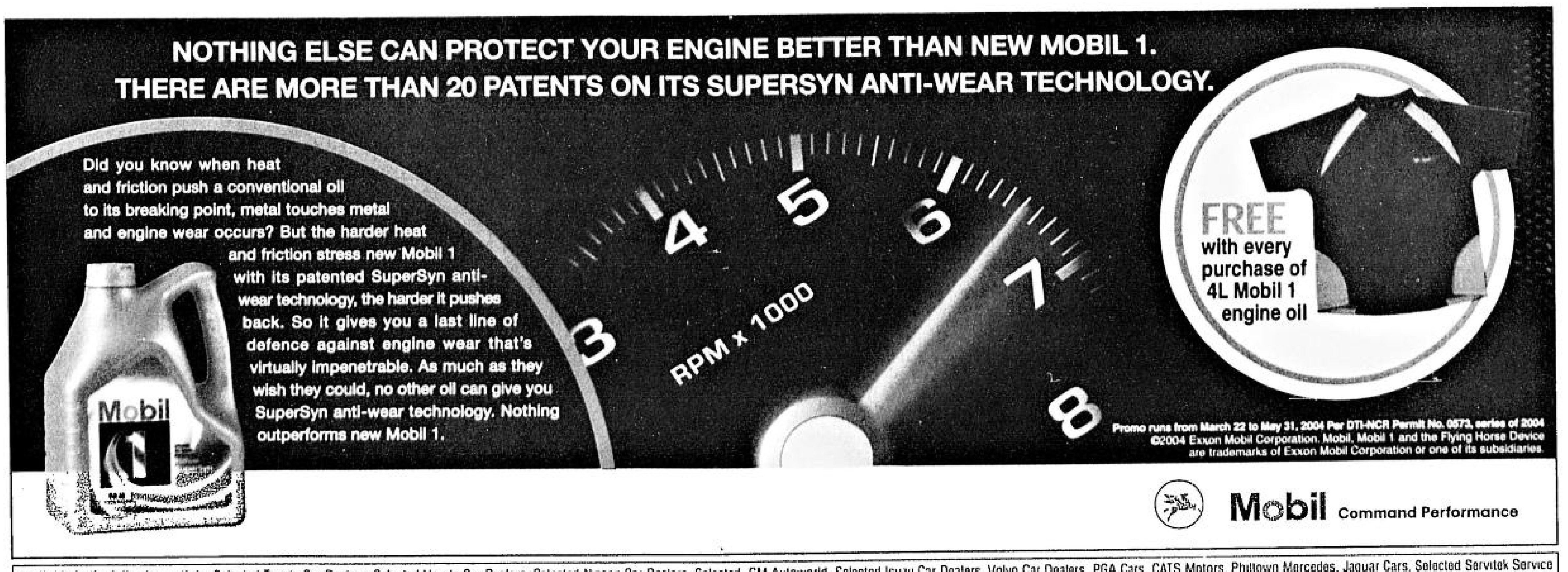

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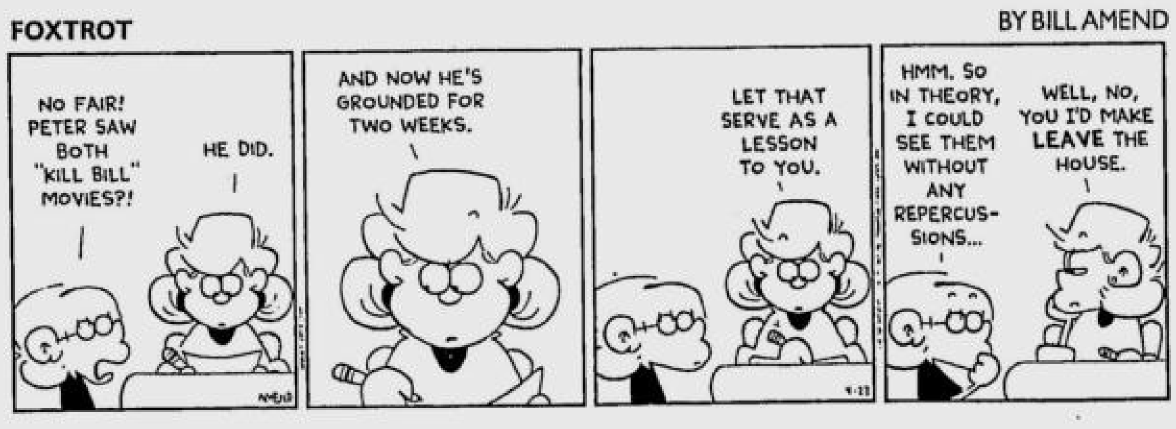
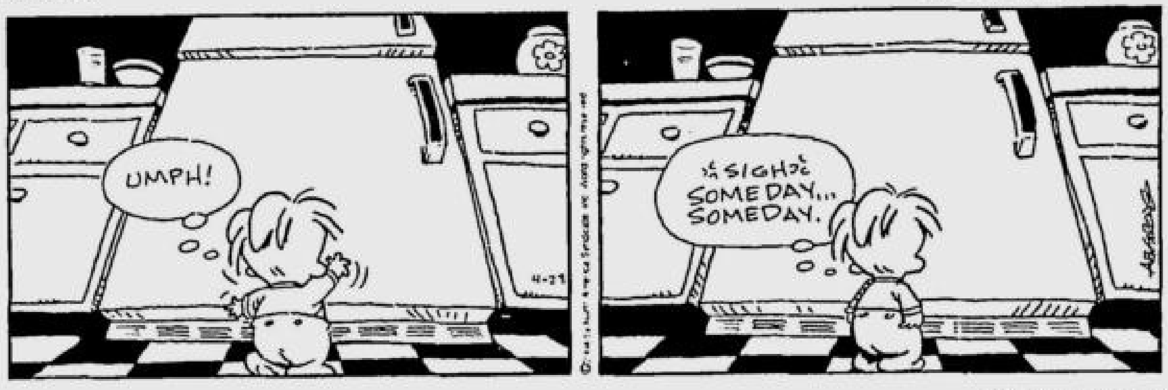
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ComicRelief
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph
FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2004

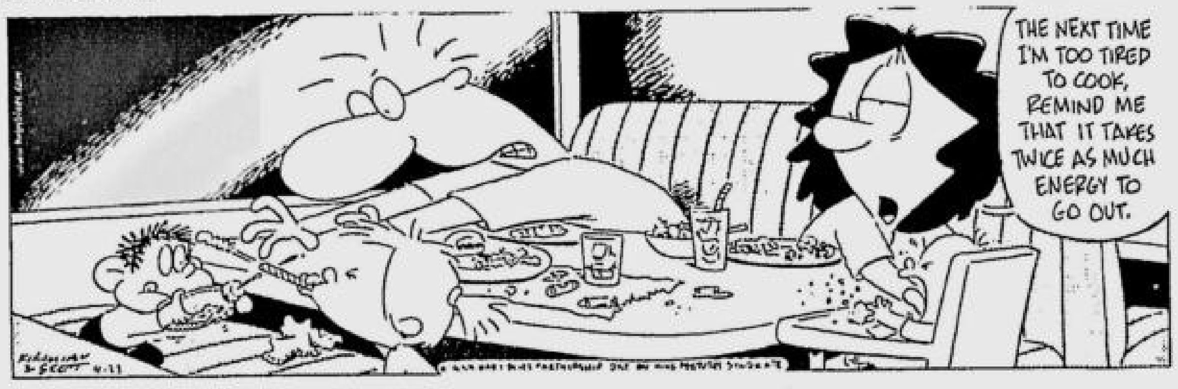
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


NO FAIR! PETER SAW BOTH "KILL BILL" MOVIES?!
HE DID.
AND NOW HE'S GROUNDED FOR TWO WEEKS.
LET THAT SERVE AS A LESSON TO YOU.
HMM. SO IN THEORY, I COULD SEE THEM WITHOUT ANY REPERCUSSIONS...
WELL, NO, YOU I'D MAKE LEAVE THE HOUSE.

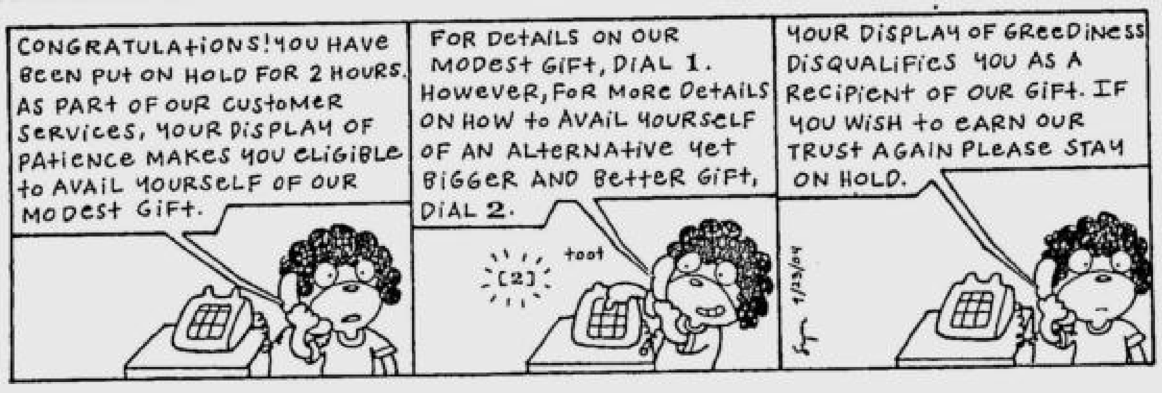
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


UMPH!
4-23
SIGH SOMEDAY... SOMEDAY.

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


THE NEXT TIME I'M TOO TIRED TO COOK, REMIND ME THAT IT TAKES TWICE AS MUCH ENERGY TO GO OUT.

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO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HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You definitely have artistic talent. However, your security matters to you, which is why you might think "starving artist" is a hyphenated word. You're friendly and social, and you appreciate beautiful surroundings. You can be a loving, responsible parent. You often have influence over others. The year ahead will be social and pleasantly active.
Birthdate of: William Shakespeare, playwright; Roy Orbison, singer; Shirley Temple, actress/diplomat.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Yesterday's confused excitement might accelerate into outright aggression today. Don't do this. You will only arouse more opposition to yourself.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're determined to get your way about something at work, or you might be determined to buy something. Either way, do not act out of obsession or compulsion.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your efforts to affect others will meet with resistance today. Do not stir up opposition. You will regret it. This is not the day to be pushy . Patience.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): No matter what kind of reforms you want to see take place at work, don't push for them today. Management and large institutions will oppose you. Choose a better time.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't try to make a point with a friend or group today. You will simply be trampled. Instead, find out what others want. Look for a win/win solution.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your determination to achieve something at work is fierce. You're convinced you're right. Is this worth alienating others, especially your boss? I think not.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): In conversations with others today, you want to have control. You want to convince others that you're right. But will this really achieve what you want? I doubt it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): There is no point in trying to convince people to agree with you about philosophical, religious or political issues. (There are none so deaf as those who are wearing headphones.)

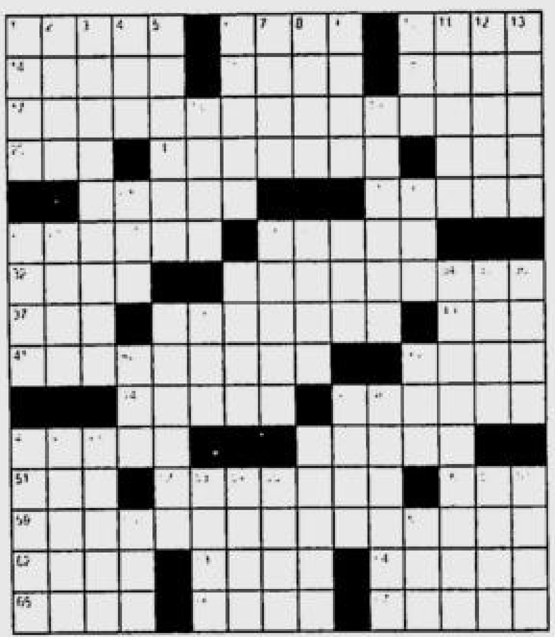
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Ruthless power struggles could take place today. Try to avoid them if you can. You will simply be fighting for a hollow victory in the end. Walk away with grace.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The best way to use today's energy is to work very hard. In fact, physical labor will be your most rewarding choice. You've got a lot of energy to burn.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't try to power trip over children or young people. That is an unfair advantage. Remember that you were once a child yourself. (Be gentle.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Family squabbles are probably just power struggles, at the crux of it all. They're just not worth it today. Do not engage. Do not fight. Do not surrender. Try to avoid these issues completely.

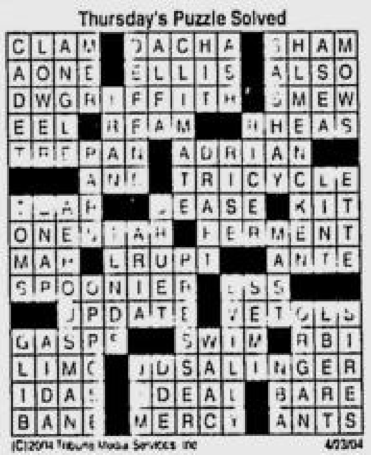
DAILY CROSSWORD


By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
4/23/04

ACROSS
1 Glistened
6 Ben and Bobby
10 Ocean predator
14 Rescued
15 Unflappable
16 "Star __"
17 Start of Bertrand Russell quote
20 Patriotic men's org.
21 Kitchen appliance
22 Religious dread
23 Pitch woo
25 Change an alarm
27 Modifies
29 Dine at home
32 Pinocchio or Ananias
33 Inclining upward
37 Away from the prow
38 Part 2 of quote
40 "Agnus __"
41 Performed again
43 FBI personnel
44 Butler wannabes
45 Magnate's purview
47 Shoulder warmer
50 Vicinities
51 Sine qua __
52 Baltic country
56 Male offspring
59 End of quote
62 Curvaceous fruit
63 Shaft between wheels
64 Egg-shaped
65 Life of Riley
66 People flicks
67 Craves

DOWN
1 Mach+ jets
2 Sarcastic laughter
3 Exaggerate
4 Real profit
5 Newspaper honcho
6 Body of water
7 Orbison and Acuff
8 Botanical anchor
9 Swing around
10 Possess
11 Princes of India
12 Director Cameron
13 So far
18 Bovine bellows
19 Making missteps
24 Feet/second connector
26 Break off
27 Having wings
28 Animation
29 _ Park, CO
30 Type of test
31 X
33 Concerning
34 Right to enter
35 __-do-well
36 Fork prong
38 Pickpocket's pick
39 Sleeve card?
42 At this moment
43 Student letters
45 Sal's canal
46 Pasture
47 Shoot from hiding
48 Book after Daniel
49 Magnani and Moffo
50 Feeds the pot
53 Applicator
54 Hack
55 Norway capital
57 Overlook
58 Beatty and Buntline
60 Mine output
61 Dam-building grp

Thursday's Puzzle Solved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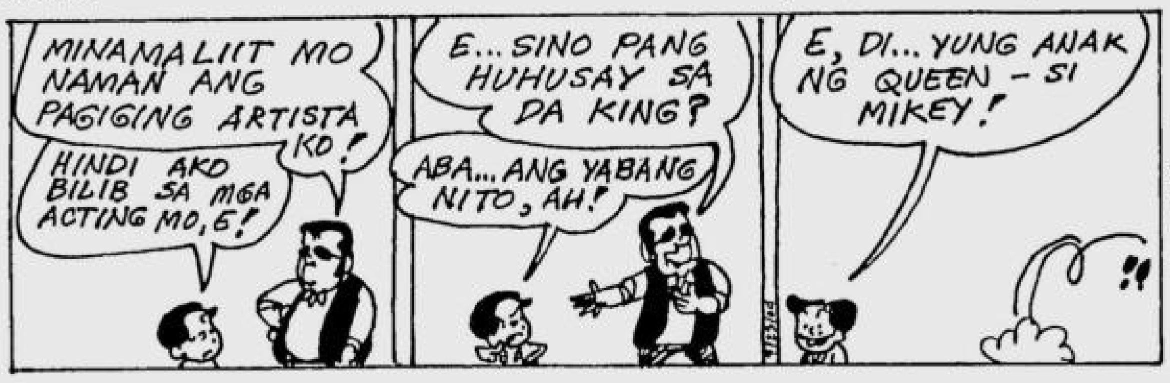
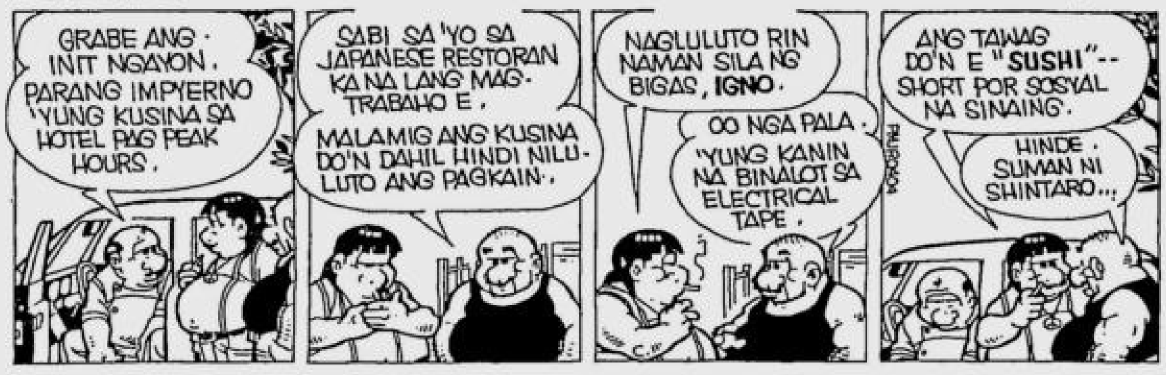
4/23/04

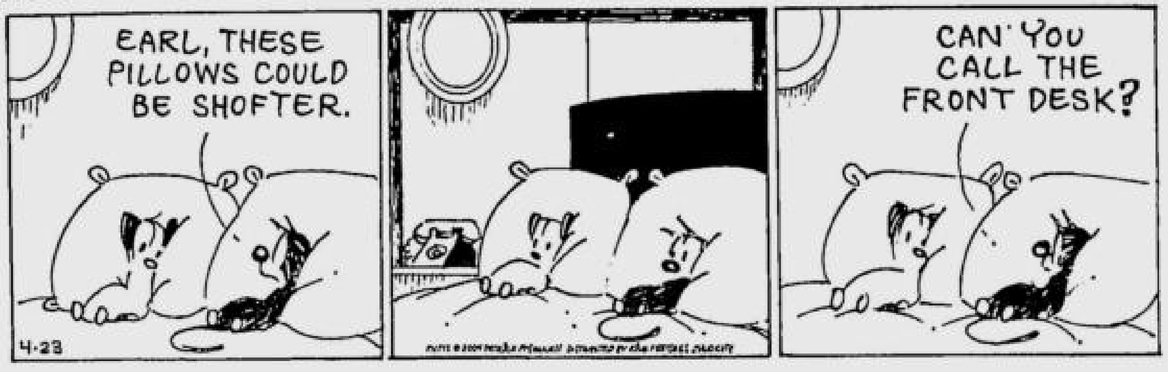
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


MINAMALIIT MO NAMAN ANG PAGIGING ARTISTA KO!
HINDI AKO BILIB SA MGA ACTING MO, E!
E... SINO PANG HUHUSAY SA DA KING?
ABA... ANG YABANG NITO, AH!
E, DI... YUNG ANAK NG QUEEN - SI MIKEY!
!!

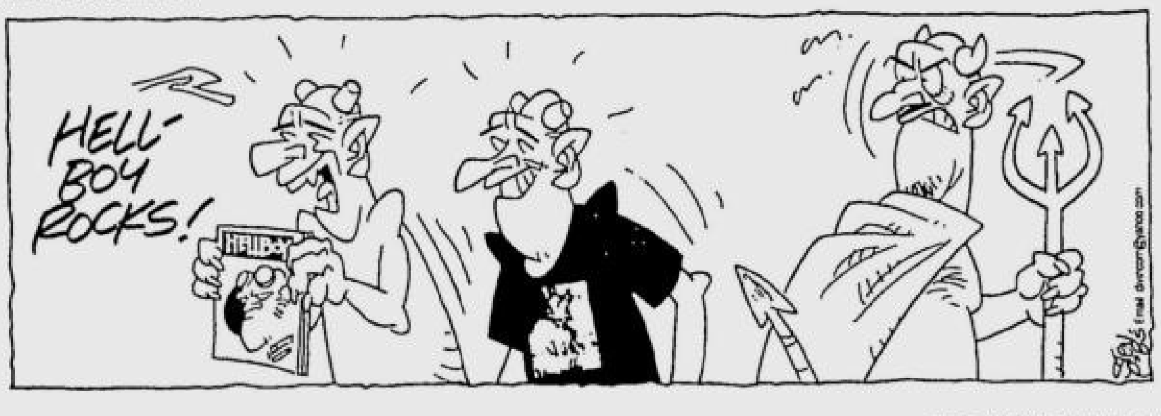
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


GRABE ANG INIT NGAYON. PARANG IMPYERNO 'YUNG KUSINA SA HOTEL PAG PEAK HOURS.
SABI SA 'YO SA JAPANESE RESTORAN KA NA LANG MAG-TRABAHO E.
MALAMIG ANG KUSINA DO'N DAHIL HINDI NILULUTO ANG PAGKAIN.
NAGLULUTO RIN NAMAN SILA NG BIGAS, IGNO.
OO NGA PALA. 'YUNG KANIN NA BINALOT SA ELECTRICAL TAPE.
ANG TAWAG DO'N E "SUSHI"-- SHORT POR SOSYAL NA SINAING.
HINDE. SUMAN NI SHINTARO...

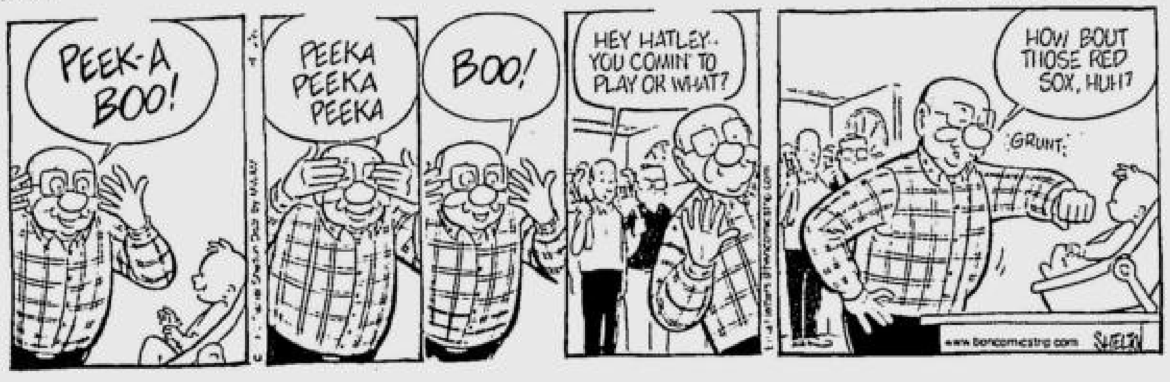
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL, THESE PILLOWS COULD BE SHOFTER.
4-23
CAN YOU CALL THE FRONT DESK?

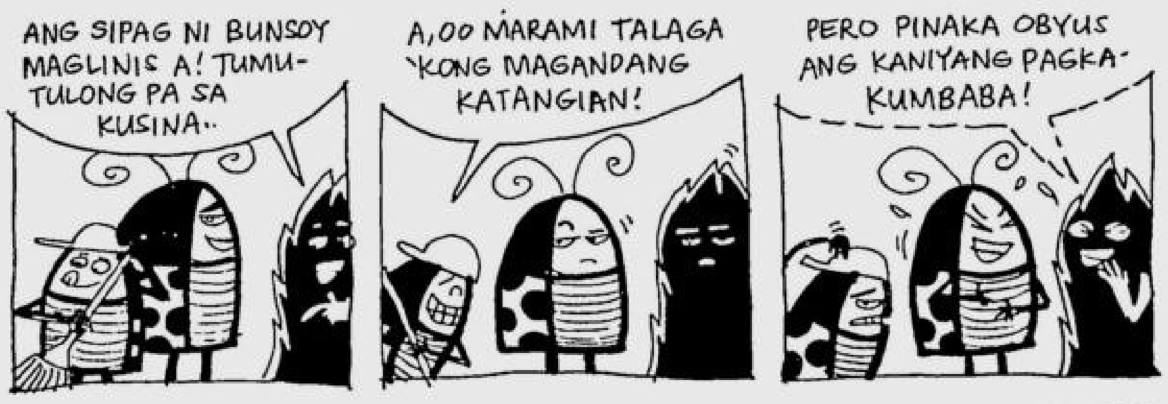
DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HELL-BOY ROCKS!
HELLBOY

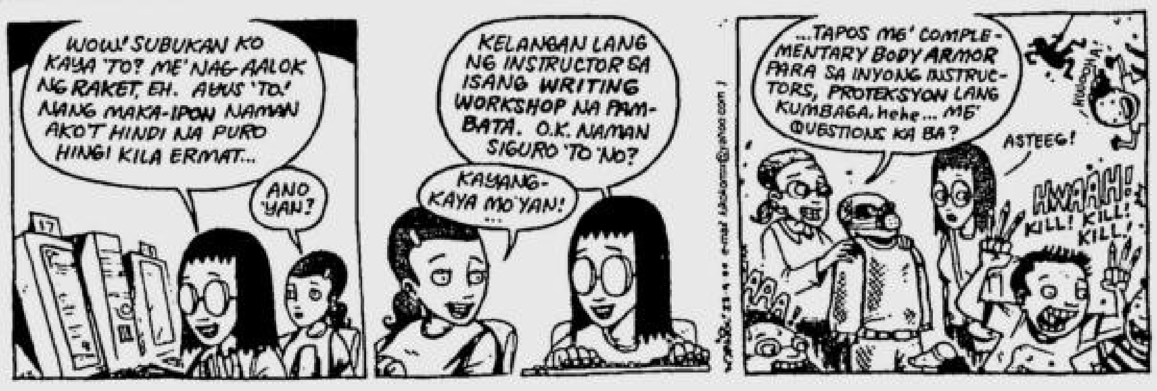
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


PEEK-A BOO!
PEEKA PEEKA PEEKA
BOO!
HEY HATLEY.. YOU COMIN' TO PLAY OR WHAT?
HOW BOUT THOSE RED SOX, HUH?
GRUNT
www.bencomicstrip.com

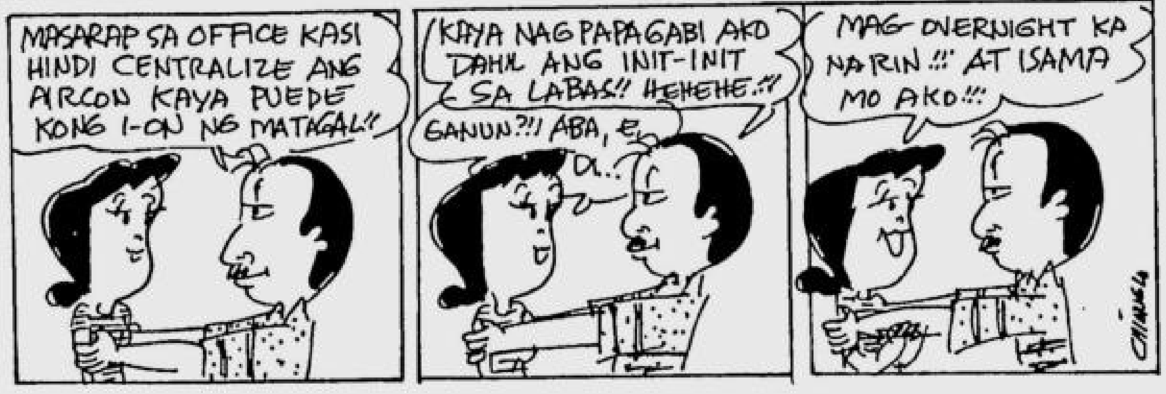
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG SIPAG NI BUNSOY MAGLINIS A! TUMUTULONG PA SA KUSINA..
A, OO MARAMI TALAGA 'KONG MAGANDANG KATANGIAN!
PERO PINAKA OBYUS ANG KANIYANG PAGKA-KUMBABA!

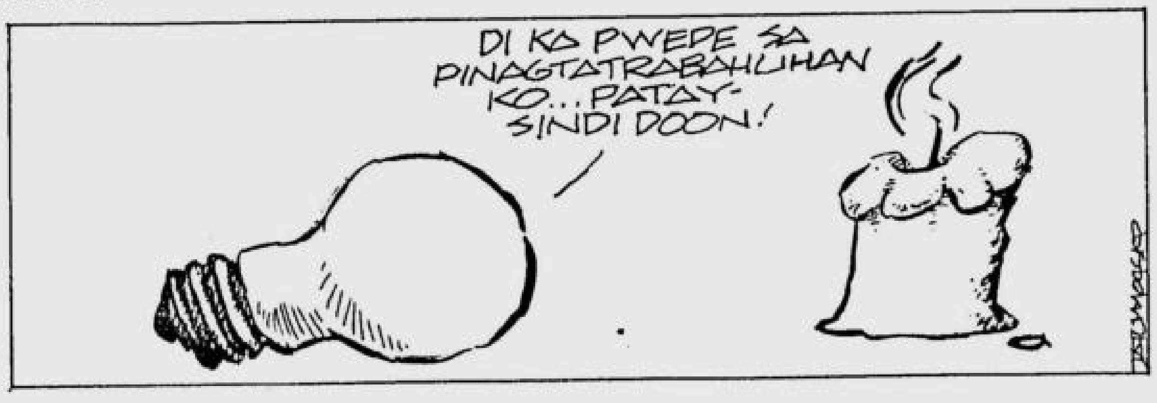
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


WOW! SUBUKAN KO KAYA 'TO? ME' NAG-AALOK NG RAKET, EH. AYUS 'TO! NANG MAKA-IPON NAMAN AKO'T HINDI NA PURO HINGI KILA ERMAT...
ANO 'YAN?
KELANGAN LANG NG INSTRUCTOR SA ISANG WRITING WORKSHOP NA PAMBATA. O.K. NAMAN SIGURO 'TO 'NO?
KAYANG-KAYA MO 'YAN!
...TAPOS MG' COMPLEMENTARY BODY ARMOR PARA SA INYONG INSTRUCTORS, PROTEKSYON LANG KUMBAGA. hehe... ME' QUESTIONS KA BA?
ASTEEG!
HWAAH!
KILL! KILL! KILL!

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MASARAP SA OFFICE KASI HINDI CENTRALIZE ANG AIRCON KAYA PUEDE KONG I-ON NG MATAGAL!
KAYA NAG PAPAGABI AKO DAHIL ANG INIT-INIT SA LABAS!! HEHEHE.!!
GANUN?!! ABA, E,
DI..
MAG-OVERNIGHT KA NARIN !!! AT ISAMA MO AKO!!!

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DI KA PWEDE SA PINAGTATRABAHUHAN KO... PATAY-SINDI DOON!

MEYERS and Fanning

Welcome the 'Cat' in your homes

THE LATEST movie adaptation of a Dr. Seuss classic is "Cat in the Hat."

The 'Cat' follows closely in the heels of another Seuss masterful creation: "How the Grinch Stole Christmas."

Except for a couple of premiere showings at the Music Museum today at 5:30 p.m. and on April 30, also at 5:30 p.m., the "Cat" sneaks into homes via VCD and DVD, which will be available on May 5.

This adaptation of the classic children's book stars Mike Meyers (Austin Powers) as the wily talking cat with a tall, striped hat and more than a few tricks up his sleeve. Set in a colorful make-believe world, the film tells the classic tale of a sister and brother, Sally (Dakota Fanning) and Conrad (Spencer Breslin), who pass a rainy afternoon with their crotchety babysitter, Mrs. Kwan (Amy Hill), during which they receive a visit from the mysterious Cat in the Hat, who leads them on a series of colorful, illogical, silly misadventures. Meanwhile, their mother (Kelly Preston), her paranoid boss (Sean Hayes), and her phony boyfriend (Alec Baldwin) present obstacles for the children as they become part of the Cat's chaotic world.

Cetrinets Fruteez, a vitamin C food supplement from Unilab, and Megavision play godfather to the Cat's special showing. Cetrinets Fruteez now comes in five groovy, fruity flavors: Orange, Grape, Apple, Lemon, and Strawberry.

Spielberg movie chronicles Munich Olympic massacre

LOS ANGELES—Filmmaker Steven Spielberg, who won his first Oscar for the Holocaust drama "Schindler's List," has taken on another tragic moment in modern Jewish history as his next project—the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Spielberg plans to start production in June and is eyeing actor Ben Kingsley for a role in the upcoming drama, which will chronicle the Summer Games marred by the kidnapping and slaying of Israeli athletes by Palestinian militants, a DreamWorks studio spokesperson said on Wednesday.

In all, 11 Israelis lost their lives in the bloody 1972 tragedy, including nine hostages killed in a botched rescue attempt at a military air base outside Munich, all while Olympics officials carried on with the competition. Five of the gunmen and a German policeman also died. Three of the militants were captured alive.

The specter of the massacre 32 years ago has haunted authorities in Greece preparing security for the upcoming Summer Olympics in Athens amid heightened concerns of potential attacks by extremists linked to the al Qaeda terror network.

Shrouded in secrecy

Details of the as-yet-untitled film have been kept shrouded in secrecy as Spielberg pins down European locations for the production, the studio spokesperson said.

She said the screenplay will be written by Eric Roth, who won an Oscar for his "Forrest Gump" script and was nominated for "The Insider." The film is to be released domestically by Universal Pictures, a unit of Vivendi Universal , and overseen by Spielberg's home studio, DreamWorks SKG. No release date has been set.

It was not clear what role Kingsley might take. He previously co-starred in "Schindler's List," which earned Spielberg Academy Awards for best picture and best director.

Oscar-winning docu

Spielberg won his second directing Oscar for the World War II film, "Saving Private Ryan." The Munich Olympics debacle also was the subject of the Oscar-winning documentary "One Day in September" (2000) as well as the 1976 television dramatization, "21 Hours at Munich."

Spielberg was last in theaters with the caper film "Catch Me If You Can" and his next movie, "The Terminal," starring Tom Hanks as a Russian immigrant stranded in a U.S. airport, is due for release in June.

After finishing the Munich Olympics film, Spielberg plans to direct a project titled "The Rivals," followed by a big-screen adaptation of H.G. Wells' alien invasion tale, "War of the Worlds," starring Tom Cruise, Daily Variety reported.

Reuters

Mel Gibson's dark night of the soul

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WRITE-UPS about **Mel Gibson**'s "The Passion" have intrigued some readers with their hints about the filmmaker's "dark night of the soul," which reportedly impelled him to decide to make a film on Christ's crucifixion more than 10 years ago.

Trouble is, no details were provided, so a nun and other people asked us to get more information on Gibson's own Passion. Well, here's what we uncovered:

About 12 years ago, Gibson admits, "I realized that I was completely spiritually bankrupt. There's a lot of misery in that!" What brought him to that low point—did his being in the movies have anything to do with it?

"You don't have to be spiritually bankrupt because you're dealing with this industry—but it helps!" is Gibson's sardonic reply. "What makes people spiritually bankrupt is a lack of maintenance."

Gibson elucidates: "Eventually, you ask yourself: What is this all about? Why am I so tortured here? I want to get out! At the same time, I'm too scared to do so.

"You're paralyzed in this no-man's-land of agony. It's that Hamlet question of: Will I check out, or will I stay? At that point, you really have to ask yourself some serious questions, and to change things, if you want answers and any kind of peace at all."

So, at that low point some 12 years ago, Gibson was impelled to look inside his wounded heart and soul, and tried to delve deeper into his faith, "because I didn't practice very well what I professed to believe."

Why did Gibson's faith suffer in Hollywood? He candidly shares, "I embraced the secularism of this industry. It was very seductive, with all the things it offered. But, no matter the excesses, the luxuries, it's just not enough and doesn't fill the void."

So, at the height of his career, Gibson questioned what it was all about. "I had to put a stop to the torture-fest, to take another route, find some answers and heal my wounds, because life is a scarring experience."

Because he had a spiritual void to fill, Gibson read the Bible. This eventually triggered a need to put Christ's Passion onscreen.

And, has his film helped fill the void? Gibson: "Let's just say that I'm more fulfilled now than I was!

"But I'm not there yet. I'm still really venal and have all the same flaws I had when I started. It's a long journey—I'm still a work in progress. But, I'm getting there!"

'XXX' on HBO

VIN Diesel's star-making vehicle, "XXX," will be screened on HBO at 8 p.m. on April 25. Diesel plays a notorious lawbreaker who is forced to cooperate with a government agent (**Samuel L. Jackson**) in infiltrating an underground Russian crime ring in Prague.

Summer treats at EK

SPEAKING of Enchanted Kingdom, the premiere theme park presents these summer treats starting on April 24 and running weekends till May 2:

Al fresco movies like "Finding Nemo" at the Spaceport area.

On April 24, an awesome display of fireworks at the ninth EK Fireworks Competition.

On April 25, fashion pacesetter Cinderella presents its "Totally Tropical Summer Collection" at the Bandstand. And South Border holds its "Rainbow Concert" at the Midway Boardwalk. Call 830-2111.

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'Big Fish' casts a big spell

MCGREGOR as the young Edward Bloom

By Ruben M. Cruz Jr.
Contributor

REVIEW

I'VE HEARD it once said that to be human is to tell stories. But does a story really have to have happened for it to be true?

In the movie "Big Fish," Edward Bloom (Albert Finney) tells the same stories about his life over and over. But what really exasperates his son William (Billy Crudup) is that his father's stories make up one big fantasy fandango. Edward has feverishly piled on elements of whimsy, mythology and romance to bring about a wild, whirling vision of his biography.

For instance, there's that time as a child when Edward, together with his friends, caught a glimpse of their own deaths through the glass eye of a witch who lives in a haunted house beside a swamp. Or that time when, as a young man, Edward befriended a lonely giant, with whom he eventually joined a circus owned by a shape-shifting ringmaster, just so he could meet his true love. His signature story is about this elusive jumbo catfish of legend that he happened to catch on the day his son was born.

Edward tells his stories with such charm and conviction that it brings a factual if not emotional authenticity to the material. The people who hear them love them. Even if they don't believe the stories, they are at least entertaining conceits that are presented with a naive relish for their absurdity.

Barometer of facts

But for William, who has heard them countless times since he was a child, the stories have lost their luster.

He laments that he doesn't really know his father, that he "might as well have been Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny," a figment of someone's imagination. William is no longer a child now whose reality is colored by wonder but a "just-the-facts only" guy (he works as a reporter for the Associated Press).

Now that his father is dying of cancer, William wants to know the truth. He wants to know the real stories behind the stories. This is easier said than done, of course, for as William says, "In telling the story of my father's life, it's impossible to separate fact from fiction, the man from the myth." Which is just fine for Edward since he believes that "a man's life can't, and shouldn't, be measured by the narrow barometer of facts."

Reality vs fantasy

"Big Fish" is one of two movies currently showing whose themes delve in that enticing and seemingly eternal clash between reality and the magical realm of fantasy.

The other movie is about that boy who never grew old, P.J. Hogan's version of Peter .Pan, which has more in common with J.M. Barrie's original novels ("The Little White Bird," "Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens," "Peter and Wendy") than the 1953 animated Disney movie.

Pseudo-fairy tale

Like Peter Pan, "Big Fish" is also based on a book (written by Daniel Wallace), and its director Tim Burton presents his movie somewhat as a bedtime story. Burton, who's no stranger to fantasies (he directed "Edward Scissorhands," "Sleepy Hollow," "The Nightmare Before Christmas"), understands exactly what we love about movies of this kind, and he conveys it with all the sweetness and sincerity he can muster.

But for a movie that's supposedly a pseudo-fairy tale, "Big Fish" surprisingly doesn't have any villains or melodramatic plot twists. Indeed, it strikes at the heart of something disturbingly real: the contrast between grown-ups who have lost the capacity to accept what they cannot see and those who have kept the purity and faith of their childhoods.

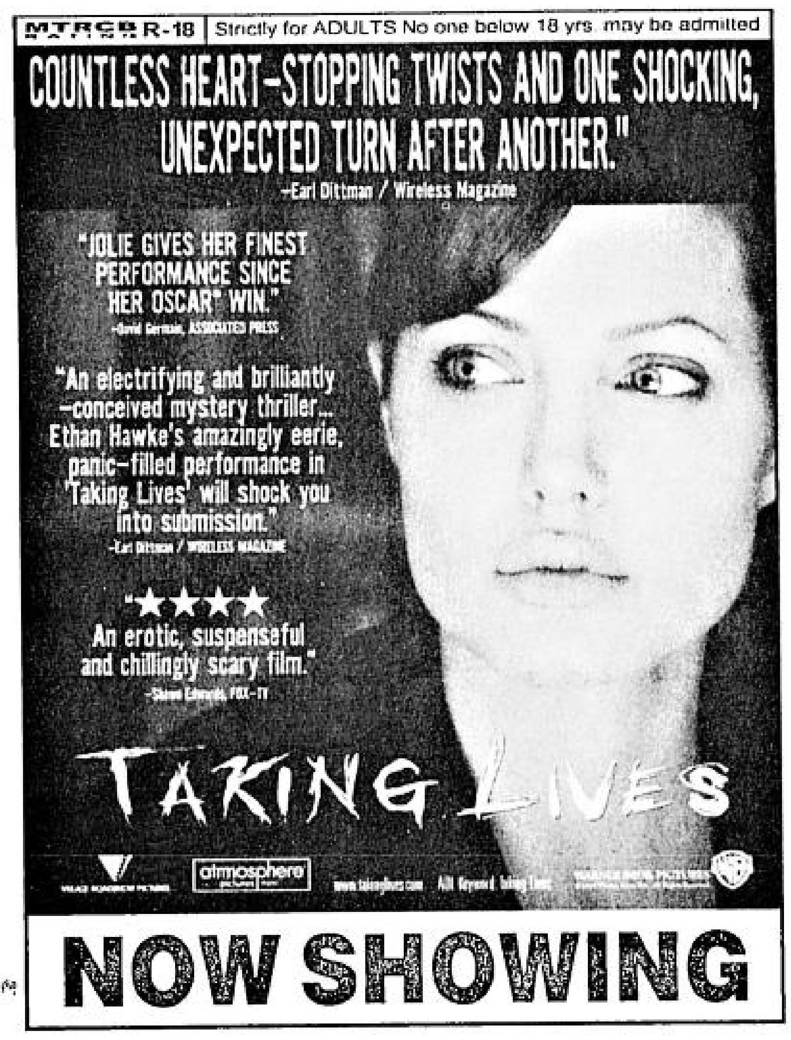
FINNEY

"Big Fish" clearly favors the lure of magic versus the reliable thud of veracity. While it doesn't say outright that rational people are bad—perhaps only dull, at least, if we are to go by Crud's constant demeanor in the movie—it gives us a delicate look at the power of believing. Rationality is a harsh taskmaster, it seems to say, and we all deserve a little enchantment in our lives. Real life deserves an occasional wink and a sense of spunk, and there are times when facts don't teach us anything.

Delightful cast

The movie has a delightful cast, with the actors all skillfully matched to their roles, and here I'm not just talking about their talent but their physical appearances, or rather, resemblance as well. For instance, the ever-dependable Ewan McGregor who plays the young Edward Bloom really looks like Albert Finney, 30 or so years ago. Edward's wife, Sandra, played by the sultry Jessica Lange, also has a dead ringer in her younger counterpart, Alison Lohman. Crudup, as William, probably gives the movie's most restrained performance, but the other actors, most of whom appear only briefly, play their roles in an appropriately fare-thee-well manner. They include the fiendishly comic Danny De Vito, Helena Bonham-Carter (playing a double role), slapdash Steve Buscemi, and Robert Guillame (he played Benson in that 80s TV sitcom of the same title) as Edward's doctor.

I must admit, this movie got to me. I laughed, I cried during the movie's most satisfying emotional climax, and I felt exhilarated when I walked out of the theatre. It's movies like "Big Fish" that makes you want to do penance for your cynicism.


MTRCB R-18 Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted
"COUNTLESS HEART-STOPPING TWISTS AND ONE SHOCKING, UNEXPECTED TURN AFTER ANOTHER."
-Earl Dittman / Wireless Magazine
"JOLIE GIVES HER FINEST PERFORMANCE SINCE HER OSCAR® WIN."
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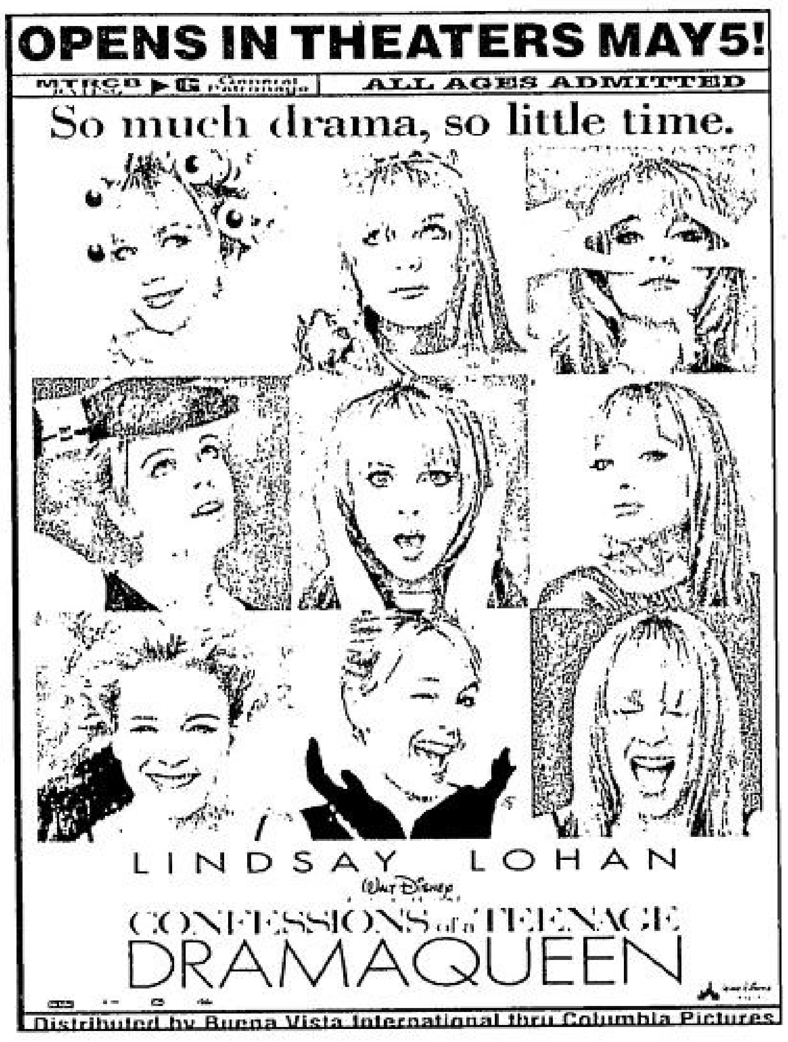
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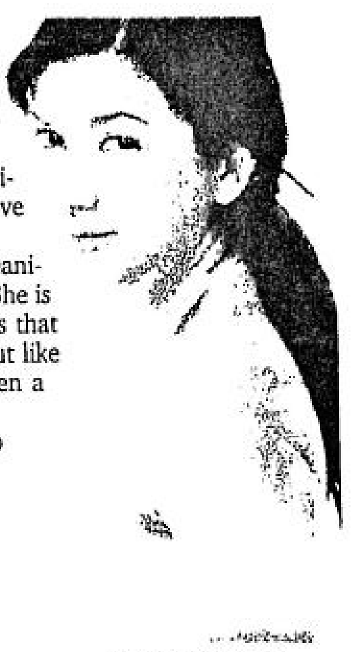
Danica, Oyo Boy troubled by Dina's love life

From page A31


DINA: Survivor

na niya."

Pride is also what Danica now feels about being the daughter of Dina Bonnevie and Vic Sotto.

"I'm very, very proud," says the celebrity daughter. "If not for them, I would have a hard time entering show business."

Now that she has entered show biz, Danica is more poised and more confident. She is one of eight young actors and actresses that Regal Films is launching to stardom. But like the punk phase, show biz had also been a stage for Danica.

"When I was young, I really liked to be in show biz," she says. "I already liked singing and acting. Then came a time when I didn't want to be show biz. Suddenly, I wanted to be in show biz again.

"*Ganoon talaga siguro,*" she adds. "It's in the blood. But I don't see myself staying forever in show biz. I don't see it as a long-term job. I don't see myself growing old in show biz."

No competition

But she does not see her mom as competition, "because she's my mom."

"If she were my sister *siguro*, we'd be competing," she adds. "I can never compete with my mom. First of all, she is my mom. That's why I'm here. If she didn't look that way, I wouldn't look this way. I can never compete with her. She would always be greater than me. That's what I believe."

In her latest movie, "I Will Survive," Dina's character is in a mother-daughter relationship that has some interesting allusions to her real life.

At 42, Dina is still one of the sexiest women in show biz. She keeps fit by going to the gym regularly and doing taebo at home whenever she can't go to the gym. Her ex-husband Vic once openly remarked that Dina was sexy at 40. After appearing on two covers of FHM, Dina is well aware that she has nothing else to prove.

She says that for her first FHM cover, she wore a string underwear but the magazine artist had erased the string to make it look like she was naked.

"When it came out, I got mad at Liza (Gokongwei, FHM publisher) and she said, '*Huwag ka nang magalit kasi* third reprint (the highest number of reprints) *na namin 'to.' Yun pala nagpaalam na sila kay* Arnold (Vegafria, Dina's manager). *Eto namang si* Arnold *hindi sinabi sa akin.*"

No other FHM issue has topped the sales of that issue, according to Dina. That's why for the second cover, she had to wear a crown. The second cover, she says, was more daring than the first. She wore flesh stockings, which the magazine was also supposed to erase. Dina, however, refused.

"I told them I changed my mind because Oyo said, 'Mommy, *'pag may makita na naman ako na binura yung* panty *mo, talagang 'wag na tayong mag-usap* forever.'"

Like Danica, Oyo also has become his own person. He now lives with his dad in Alabang, which Dina says is a good thing.

"*Dati kasi* Oyo could not identify with anybody in the house," says Dina. "*Puro kasi kami babae.* And then *napansin namin na masyado na siyang nagiging* close sa driver so I told Vic about it."

Dina says that was also the same time when Oyo got depressed over seeing her get beaten up by her second husband. Doctors had told Dina that her son had to be away from that kind of environment. Now, Oyo has become a responsible person."

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Danica, Oyo Boy troubled by Dina's love life

DANICA. 'I want to be me.'

By Nini Valera and Kathryn Fatima Reyes

DANICA Sotto admits she's sometimes bothered by the love life of her famous mom, Dina Bonnevie.

"I'm bothered when there's gossip about my mom and dad," says the daughter of Dina and Vic Sotto. "But the most important thing is I like both parents to be happy. *Sana okey sila pareho*. They don't have to be with each other. They could be with other people. But *sana naman*, whoever they are, they would care about my parents.

"*Minsan lang, natatakot ako*. But lately, *wala naman akong* fear."

Oyo himself is like a father figure to Dina and is protective of her, especially when it comes to her suitors.

"There was a time," says Dina, "when word got to Oyo that I was dating somebody who's younger, he asked me, 'Ma, I heard something, *ganyan-ganyan*. Is that true?' *Sabi ko*, 'No,' and then *sabi niya*, 'Ma, I hope, ha? I hope! *Mahiya ka naman*.' *Pagkatapos talaga nun* I talked to the guy and I told him I had to stop seeing him."

Younger guys

Although most of Dina's suitors are younger guys, she says she never seriously considered being with one, except for that one time when Oyo confronted her. Even Diether Ocampo, with whom she did a movie in 2002, couldn't resist Dina's charms. During the filming of that movie Diether reportedly got very close to her. Dina now admits that he did court her.

"*Niloloko ko nga si* Oyo about Diether eh," she says. "*Sabi ko, 'Pano 'yan*, Oyo, this guy likes me. Eh, *ang* daddy *mo naman, kaedad lang ng ate mo yung mga* girlfriends *niya, eh, 'di pwede na rin ako.' Sabi niya*, 'Mommy, *tumigil ka ha? Nakakahiya ka!' Galit na galit siya na para bang sinasabi hindi kita kikilalaning* mommy *'pag ginawa mo 'yun.*"

But Danica has a different take on her mom when it comes to dating younger men.

"It's not my mom's type to go out with younger guys," she says. "It's the younger guys who are after her. But as long as she's happy, and she's not messing up her life, as long as she's not doing something that would jeopardize her future, it's okay.

"She's now going out with somebody and I find him okay," Danica confides. "He's not from show biz. So far, so good."

Punk phase

According to Dina, her daughter went through a punk phase when she did not wash her hair and wore it in spikes. She went around in a pair of round John Lennon shades and wore hardware for jewelry, which irritated her mother, the glamorous Dina Bonnevie, no end.

"She was so different from me," Dina recalls. "She grew her hair so long. *Ayaw niyang mag*-shampoo. *Amoy mais ang ulo niya. Palagi siyang naka*-round *na* shades *na parang si* John Lennon. *'Tapos, yung* hair niya, she had all this *tusok-tusok na* stuff. And then she had all these hardware jewelry *na hindi mo maintindihan*."

Says Danica, "I was in an awkward stage. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my hair. I grew up with boys--my brother Oyo, my cousin Miko."

Eventually, Dina realized that her daughter was trying to find her own identity.

"That was the time *kasi* when Danica was so pissed with people comparing her to me," says Dina. "And she said, 'I wanna be me. I'm Danica Sotto. *Hindi ako anak ni* Dina *at hindi ako anak ni* Vic. I am me.'"

No privacy

If it had been another kid and not Danica, who apparently inherited her mother's toughness, the experience would have been traumatic for the daughter of Dina and Vic.

"People recognize you," says Danica. "I never experienced privacy. That's the thing. I remember when I was in kinder or prep, my teacher would call me and ask me if it was true that my father was like this and like that. So at an early age, I got used to intrigues.

"The teachers were not the only nosy ones. The *yayas*, too. When they picked up my classmates in school, they would also ask me stuff. There was a time *na na*-trauma *ako*. But I eventually got used to it."

But she admits there is also an upside to being the child of a celebrity couple.

"People were nice to me," Danica admits. "They would give me special treatment because I'm the daughter of Vic and Dina."

"*Bata batchuchay*" is how Dina described Danica as a child. Being no different from mothers who only want the best for their kids, she made her daughter follow a strict diet, and to wear braces and a chin cup.

To a young child, wearing braces and a chin cup, were a form of torture. It demolished Danica's self-confidence in school. Both were contraptions of torture that she had to endure in order to become perfect. But she also had to answer endless questions from her classmates who wanted to know if she had fallen down the stairs.

"I didn't really resent the chin cup and the braces," Danica claims. "Maybe, when I was younger. It was like, 'what's this?' It was hard to eat with braces, and I was so lazy to go to the dentist. I hated them at first. But later on, I was thankful that she (Dina) did all this for me."

Fights

Now, the braces and chin cup are off and Danica is 22 and a beauty. The punk phase was, after all, just a phase.

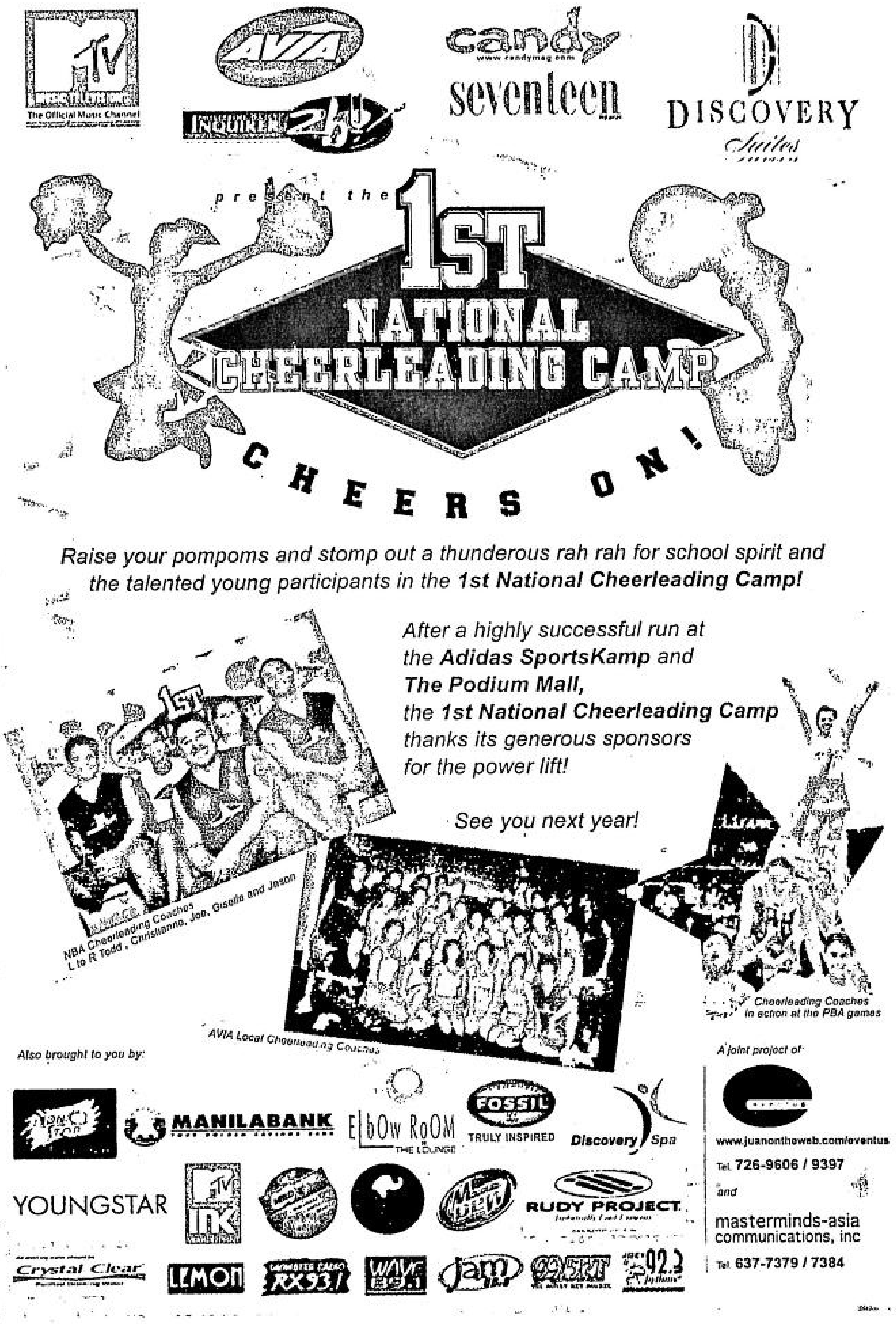
Even then, there were more fights between mother and daughter. A recurring theme is how Danica should conduct herself as a young lady. Dina also used to teach her daughter how to smile and pose in front of the camera. Now, the proud mother says that Danica does it so well, she's even better than her mom.

"*Tingnan mo ngayon*," Dina says of Danica, "workout galore *siya, laman ng* gym. *Mas maarte pa sa akin, nagpapa*-derma *pa. Ako naman ngayon ang nagkaka*-pimples *dahil sa* stress *sa* work and she goes, 'Eeeeww... your skin is just so bad!'

"Now, look at Danica," Dina says with pride. "I mean, you can see *naman, 'di ba*? She has bloomed into a real woman. *Ang ganda-ganda*

DANICA/ A30

MS D still sexy at 42



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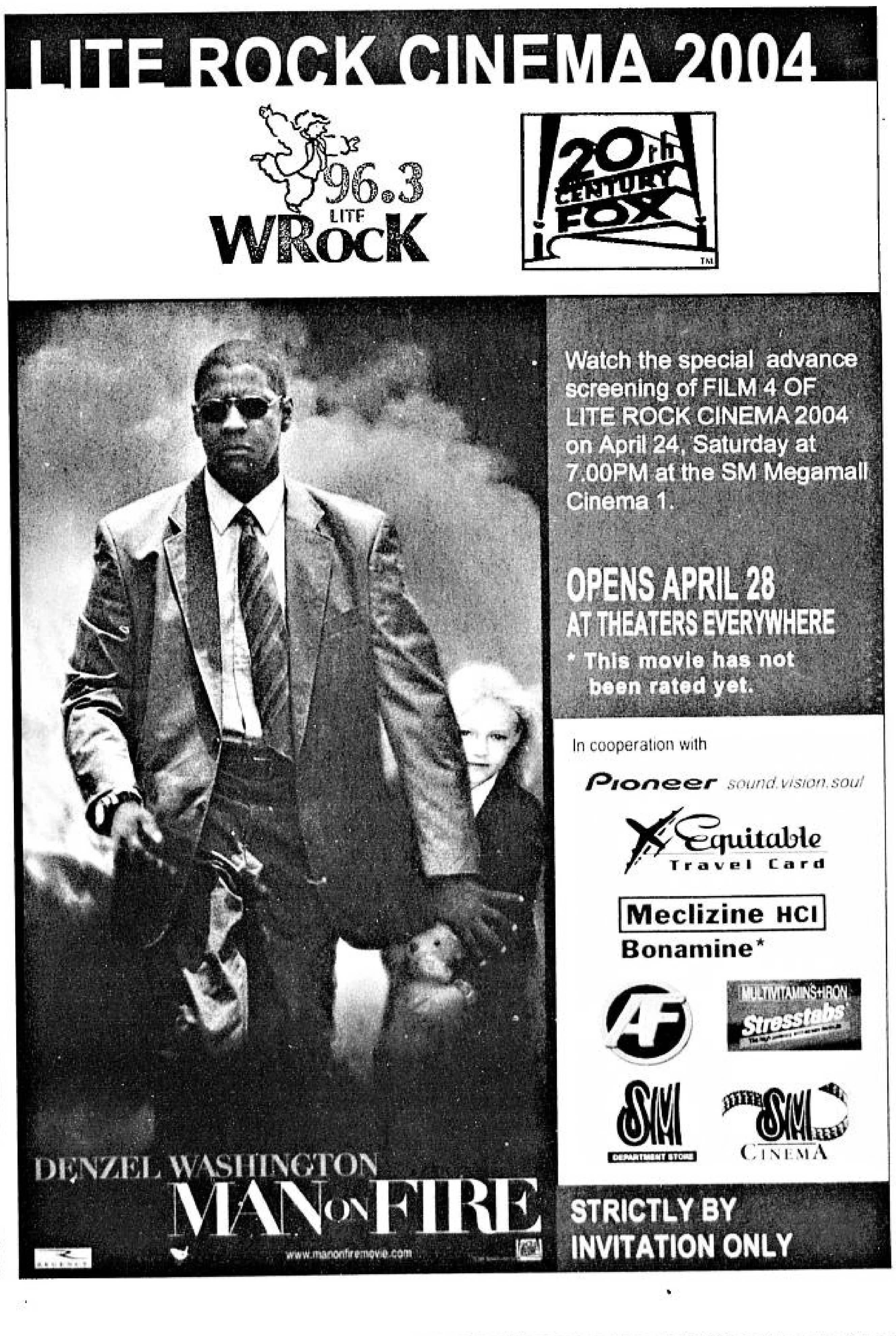

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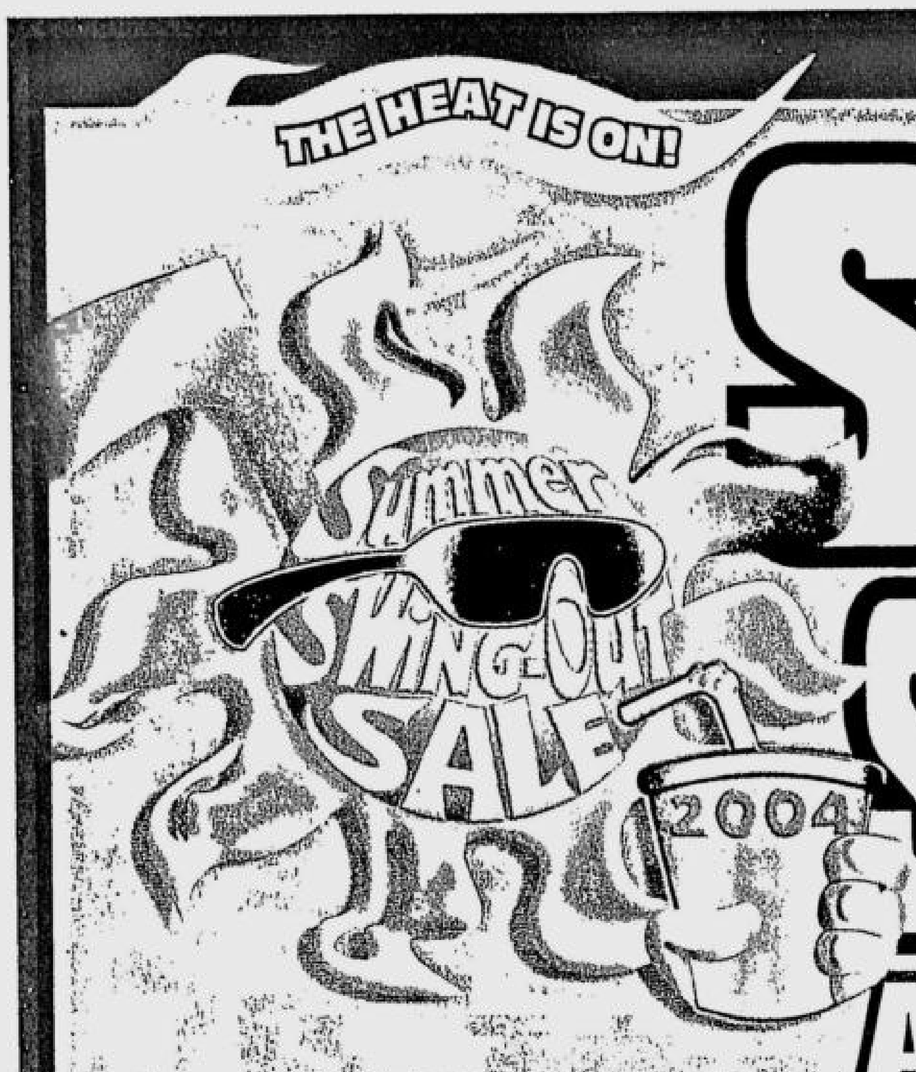

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IMF upgrades growth outlook for RP

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund has upgraded its 2004 economic growth outlook for the Philippines from 4 percent to 4.5 percent, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). It is, however, expecting the country to remain the laggard among Asia's emerging economies over the next two years.

Despite the upgrading, the revised 4.5-percent growth forecast of the IMF for the Philippines remained the slowest in the region.

The IMF has projected a much higher growth of 7 percent for Thailand and 5.7 percent for Malaysia for this year. Even Indonesia was projected to post a better growth rate of 4.8 percent.

The four Asean countries combined are projected to grow by 5.4 percent, better than the 5 percent growth registered last year.

"In the Philippines, vulnerabilities remain, so it is important—especially during the run-up to the presidential elections in May—to stay on the fiscal course and stand ready to tighten monetary policy should exchange rate depreciation pose a threat to the attainment of the inflation target," the fund said in its latest world economic outlook released yesterday.

"The priorities are to act forcefully and without delay to increase tax revenue, restructure the power sector, strengthen the banking system and improve the business environment," it explained.

The increase in its GDP growth projection for the Philippines was in line with the IMF's expectation of a strong rebound by emerging Asia, after grappling with the outbreak of killer virus SARS.

GDP refers to the total amount of goods and services produced by an economy and is considered the single most important indicator of economic performance.

The IMF said "emerging Asia"—which the fund defined to include China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines—had grown rapidly over the past three decades and was an increasingly dynamic force in the global economy.

The sharp rise in intra-regional trade, the fund said, suggested that the region was, as a whole, becoming less dependent on the rest of the world and more of an autonomous engine of growth.

China was particularly cited as an important consumer of final goods, contributing to growth in the rest of the world especially Japan.

The IMF said it was expecting emerging Asia to grow by 7.2 percent this year, sustaining the same level of growth posted last year.

"With the recovery following the Asian financial crisis, emerging Asia's imports from the rest of the world now account for almost 2.5 percent of GDP of the rest of

IMF/B5

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Gov't to push for increases in petroleum taxes

By Michelle V. Remo

THE INTER-AGENCY Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) will lobby for increases in the excise taxes imposed on petroleum products, saying that the rates applied on them are already outdated.

In its recent meeting, members of the DBCC agreed to include this measure in its legislative agenda. A source in the government said the DBCC would consult with the Department of Energy for the proposal. It is planning to submit the proposal to the next Congress.

"The move is not for anything else but for practical reasons. The value of P1 is now much lower than what it was in 1996 when the tax rate was set," said the government official.

The official said the problem with the current excise tax rates applied on petroleum products, as stated under the Tax Code, is that they are specific.

For instance, leaded premium gasoline is slapped a tax of P5.35 per liter; unleaded premium gasoline, P4.35; kerosene, 60 centavos, and Diesel, P1.63.

The official said these rates were already inappropriate because of inflation. This is the reason the DBCC will also ask Congress to pass a bill that will automatically increase excise tax rates on a regular basis, the source said.

"There should be a law allowing the automatic adjustments in excise tax rates to reflect inflation. Since Congress usually takes much time in passing a bill, automatically increasing the rates will be helpful," the source said.

Aside from petroleum products, the DBCC will also push for the inclusion of other products in the automatic adjustment of their specific tax rates. Products that are subject to excise taxes, such as cigarettes and alcohol, are imposed specific tax rates.

The government official said the DBCC has yet to come up with the estimated additional revenue that could be generated with the planned measure.

While the move to increase the excise tax imposed on petroleum products can be a big boost to the government's revenue collection efforts, it is also expected to generate strong objection from affected sectors, like transport. Transport groups recently lobbied strongly for a fare hike following increases in the cost of oil products.

RP aims to become world leader in renewable energy

THE PHILIPPINES aims to become the world leader in geothermal energy as it accelerates its bid to expand its renewable energy resources, said National Transmission Corp. (Transco) president and CEO Alan Ortiz.

Oritiz said the expansion of the renewable energy sector would help protect the country's environment while generating substantial foreign exchange savings since this would rely mostly on indigenous resources.

He made the statement on behalf of Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. at a meeting with business leaders from Dagupan City in Pangasinan.

In the same forum, Ortiz also announced the forthcoming completion of the P200-million San Roque Hydro Associated Transmission Line project. The Miyazawa-funded 20-circuit kilometer dedicated transmission facility will connect the $1.15 San Roque power plant in San Manuel, Pangasinan to the Luzon power grid.

He also unveiled Transco's P990.43-million Miyazawa-funded Binga-San Manuel transmission line upgrading project and the P2.9-billion Asian Development Bank-sponsored Luzon transmission line upgrading projects.

ORTIZ

Both are slated for completion within the next two years.

Ortiz said Pangasinan and the rest of Luzon possess substantial indigenous resources that could be tapped for the island's growing requirements.

BCDA seeks ₱3-B reduction in cost of highway project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority is asking the winning bidder of the Clark-Tarlac Highway contract to bring down the cost of the project

BCDA president Rufo Colayco said that the winning consortium—composed of Hazama Corp., Taisei Corp. and Nissei Steel Corp.—had offered the lowest bid of P11 billion for the 44-kilometer highway.

The group bested two others (MTI composed of Maeda Corp., Toyo Construction Co. Ltd. And Ishikawa-Harima Heavy Industries Ltd. Co.; and KOJM made up of Kajima Corp., Obayashi Corp., JFE Engineering Corp. and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd.) in a bidding conducted late last year.

The highway forms part of a project that will be financed by a $315-million concessional loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. It will link the Clark special economic zone in Angeles, Pampanga to industrial hub Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac.

The Clark-Tarlac highway is one of two packages comprising the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project (SCTEP) that is meant to make easier the expansion of businesses and logistics facilities in Central Luzon.

"We want the contractor to agree on an P8-billion price tag for the Clark-Tarlac package," Colayco said. "So far, the Japanese group has agreed to slash P1.2 billion from their original bid of P11 billion."

The official explained that the talks to pare down the costs were also being done under rules set by JBIC.

The other component of the SCTEP is the 50.5-km Subic-Clark highway, which would link Subic's seaport facilities to Clark's airport facilities. The new road is expected to cut travel time between the two points from as long as two hours to just 30 minutes.

GSMI eyes regional expansion

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

GIN maker Ginebra San Miguel Inc. (GSMI) said it would expand into Vietnam, Thailand and other countries in the Asean.

GSMI chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. said the company was now laying down the plan for this expansion effort.

The firm reported an 886-percent growth in exports last year, boosting revenue by 6 percent to P12.1 billion.

The company is also set to further improve its relationship with customers to bridge the gaps in its distribution system.

"We want to be the company that shapes the growth of the hard liquor industry and continues to increase our value in a way that meets the expectations of the market and our investors," Cojuangco said.

"To do this we should be more proactive. We will grow faster when we help our dealers to profit faster."

Cojuangco said GSMI had reviewed "every part of our operations and embarked on a program to regain our momentum, further strengthening the foundations on which GSMI can continue to grow and prosper."

This it will do by pushing its dealers to increase penetration of hard liquor outlets and enhance their multi-product portfolio. GSMI has been focusing on improving both the appeal and value of its products, specifically its flagship brand, Ginebra San Miguel.

It observed steady growth in GSM Blue and potential growth in other complementary brands or sub-brands, such as Gran Matador brandy.

The company was recently cited as the world's No. 1 gin brand with sales at 27 million cases a year or five times that of the second-leading brand.

In a December 2003 report of US-based alcoholic beverage research firm Impact Databank, GSMI topped a list of 10 global brands, selling some 27.4 million cases in 2002. Impact Databank is a major source for data on the world alcoholic beverage industry. Its reports are used by several international publications, including the Wall Street Journal and New York Times.

Ginebra San Miguel, the flagship brand of GSMI, outsold Diageo's Gordon's, which rolled out about 5.2 million cases in 2002, and Tanqueray, at 2 million cases; Pernod Ricard's Seagram's, with 3.2 million cases; and Allied Domecq Spirits & Wines' Beefeater, with 2.3 million cases.

The country's gin consumption level was higher than the United States' 11.59 million cases, Spain's 3.99 million cases, the United Kingdom's 2.8 million cases and India 1.68 million cases. GSMI reported earlier an 886-percent increase in exports in 2003, with 887,000 cases of liquor exported in 2003 from 90,000 cases in 2002.

The company also posted a 6-percent growth in net sales revenues and consolidated sales volume in 2003.

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DoH urged to check complaints vs HMO

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) has asked the Department of Health to address complaints involving medical service provider Caritas Health Shield Inc. (CHSI).

In a letter to Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, SEC chair Lilia Bautista asked that the DOH check CHSI's trust fund and see whether it can deliver on its promised benefits and services to the public.

The SEC issued the letter following complaints raised by the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies Inc. (PFPPCI).

PFPCI claimed that CHSI has integrated pre-need pension plan features in its health maintenance organization or HMO plan and that the company was soliciting investments from the public without a license.

The pre-need association also claimed that CHSI has not set-up a trust fund to guarantee the delivery of benefits and services to the public and that its paid-up capital is P17 million, far below the P50 million required of pre-need companies.

Last June, the SEC wrote CHSI and brought these concerns to its attention.

CHSI told the SEC that being an HMO, it was under the administrative jurisdiction of the DoH and that all of its health care programs have been submitted to and passed by the DoH.

The SEC said the case of CHSI was not unique since insurance companies and banking institutions have introduced new features to their traditional products that are associated with pre-need products.

"These innovative products are approved and subject to the appropriate regulatory measures imposed by their respective regulatory agencies to address the risks attendant to the new features. We understand the same safeguards were put in place when the DoH approved and allowed the (CHSI) HMO plan to be sold," SEC wrote.

Unilab vs the big boys

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

UNILAB has served notice to the multinational competition dominating the Philippine drug industry—it is filing eight more patent applications improving on their most profitable pharmaceutical products whose exclusivities have expired or about to.

More than that, Unilab, the largest Filipino drug company that has now become a regional player, will gladly wage war in court and in media to defend its right to manufacture similar but cheaper drugs.

United Laboratories president Carlos Ejercito recounted before an employers' conference Wednesday the "nuisance patent" suits resorted to by the foreign giants to prevent Third World competition from manufacturing generic versions.

"We cannot ignore the malice behind the efforts of big pharma MNCs to extend their product patent extensions ... in order to block competition," said Ejercito, alluding to the patent case filed by AstraZeneca against Unilab only last week before the Parañaque Regional Trial Court.

(See Cocktales last Monday for additional background.)

The patent infringement case had been timed to prevent Unilab from launching its branded but half-priced version of the anti-hypertensive drug felodipine.

The Philippine suit is similar to the 71 lawsuits initiated by AstraZeneca, Europe's second largest drug manufacturer, to block other companies from formulating their own version of Prilosec, the heartburn drug whose worldwide sales brought $5.7 billion to AstraZeneca in 2001 alone.

Because of its increasing head-to-head competition with the MNCs, Unilab last year decided to withdraw from the foreign-dominated Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association of the Philippines.

Polo and the Philippines

GOVERNING the exclusive Manila Polo Club is like governing the Philippines.

Club members are constantly complaining about the poor service and the quality of the food, but any proposal to increase the club dues gets hooted down. In the Philippines, everyone is complaining about bad roads and crumbling infrastructure, but everybody tries to dodge taxes whenever they can.

After receiving poor proxy feedback, the Manila Polo board decided that the scheduled special shareholders' meeting yesterday be postponed to May 5.

The meeting is being called to amend the club's bylaws, so that the board would no longer have to round up the *dons* and the *doñas*—only the board and a council of ex-presidents will suffice under the proposed amendment—every time the club's finances is in jeopardy.

The monthly membership dues at the club, incidentally, is P1,200, about the price of a good meal in a Makati hotel.

The proposed increase amounts to P375/month.

Judicial spanking

A FORMER president of the Baguio chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Abelardo Estrada, has been publicly lumped among the "legal mercenaries" and "servants" by Executive Judge Clifton Ganay of the Regional Trial Court of Agoo, La Union.

"(Lawyers) have that notion that they are more equal than others in the community," Ganay said in a recent decision penalizing Estrada's client for theft. "Thus when they are treated servants of their clients, which of course is the real thing, they resent it."

"Lawyers want to be idolized," the judge continued. "They want to be lionized ... Even if they are paid as legal mercenaries, they act as if the fees are incidental to their being hired because they are the clients' champions."

Fortunately for Estrada, the judge stopped short of quoting Shakespeare's famous line from Henry VI.

Heard through the grapevine

A BAGUIO RTC judge, known for his strictness and apparent straightness, has unfortunately been suspended for a year for gross ignorance of the law.

The Supreme Court has chosen not to publicly release the decision.

The judge was a former clerk at the Court of Appeals.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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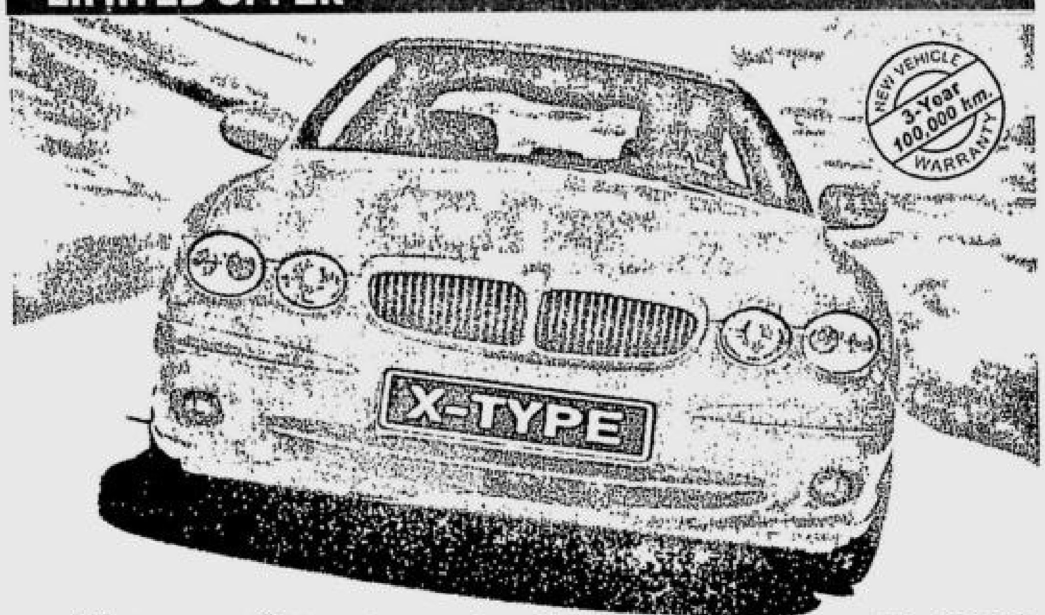

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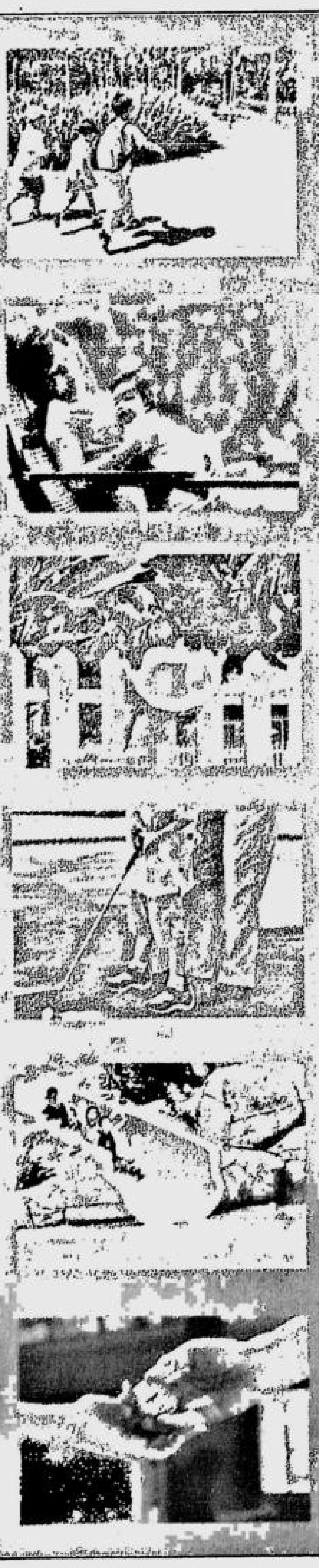

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People, Events & Products

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Managing diabetes effectively

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Reaching Out for the Lord (ROL) Series - ROL 19
Tuklasan Sector Marriage Encounter Foundation of the Phils.
Marriage Encounter (ME) Weekend
MARCH 5-7 2004

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Ministry for Youth Affairs stage 'Vote Ko 'To'

SOME 1,500 enthusiastic young people from the Archdiocese of Manila gathered together Feb. 28 in Mater Ecclesia Gym at San Carlos Seminary for an afternoon of interactive youth forum on socio-political issues. With the theme "Vote Ko 'To—Transformative Leadership", the Ministry for Youth Affairs (MYA) headed by Fr. Rufino C. Sescon Jr (MYA minister) and Rev. Msgr. Vicente D. Bauson (Campus Ministry director) organized "Ka-Talk Youth Forum Series 19".

"Vote Ko 'To—Transformative Leadership" aimed to make the young people a creative and non-violent social force in our society. This could be made possible only if they would be listened to, responded to, guided and equipped with the right values and attitudes. MYA believes this is a moral response on the part of the Church to let the voice of the youth be heard and echo to the country's political and church leaders.

The talented students-members of the Centro Escolar University (CEU) Dramatic Guild did the doxology and opening number.

Part of the program was the conduct of "Youth Choice", wherein participants cast their voted on the choice of President as well as identified two important qualities perceived by them as "conditiones sine qua non" of a national leader. Bro. Dennis Cula SJ, a resource person from "Simbahang Lingkod", gave an informative talk on "Youth and Politics", specifically the role of the youth in the electorate process.

One of the major highlights of the youth forum was the first encounter of the youth with the new Archbishop of Manila His Grace Gaudencio B. Rosales DD. During the event, he challenged the young people to look beyond the May 2004 elections. He invited each of them to join him in his crusade to fight bad governance and institutionalized corruption and to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. "Not by head on collision," remarked Archbishop Rosales, "but by oblique opposition".

"Very soon,' he further stated, "the Archdiocese of Manila will launch a movement wherein peoples of all walks of life" may join. It aims to "operationalize the love of Jesus Christ" by helping the least among us and is to be titled as 'PnP', which stands for 'Pondo ng Pinoy', 'Pag-Ibig ng Panginoon' at 'Pag-asa ng Pilipino'".

Litz Ong and Mark Marsori, students from De La Salle University, hosted the event. Roxanne Barcelo, a Genesis talent and considered one of the youth's role models, expressed her message to everyone with a song number. Bong Quintana, special events manager of Backroom, directed the successful "Ka-Talk Youth Forum Series 19."

PNOC
The Energy Company

PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION
PNOC Bldg 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio,
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Direct Line: 840-2024 / Fax No.: (632) 840-1459

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) invites interested contractors to apply for pre-qualification and submit sealed bids for the project:

Front End Engineering Design for the Batangas to Manila Natural Gas Pipeline PM04-462

The Approved Budget for the Contract is PhP140,000,000.00 chargeable against PNOC EC fund.

Pre-qualification documents shall be available for issuance from the PNOC EC Operation Support Group (c/o Mr. Carlos L. Mejias or George N. Alejandro) starting April 23, 2004 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS: Two Hundred (PhP200.00). Only contractors who can submit all the pre-qualification requirements on or before May 20, 2004 are eligible to purchase the bid documents.

Bid documents shall be available to eligible bidders starting May 21, 2004 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS: Two Thousand Five Hundred (PhP2,500.00)

The bidding shall utilize a two (2) sealed envelope system. The first envelope shall contain the Technical Bid and the second envelope shall contain the Financial Bid. The Technical & Financial Bids shall be submitted in two (2) sets each at the above address on or before 3:00 P.M. of July 12, 2004. The Technical Bid shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

The evaluation procedure to be used for the project shall be quality-cost based. The Technical Proposal shall be given a weight of seventy percent (70%) and the Financial Proposal shall be given a weight of thirty percent (30%). The Technical Bid shall be evaluated first and only the Financial Bid of the consultants who meet the minimum technical rating shall be opened. The opening of the Financial Bids shall be announced during the Pre-bid Conference.

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a Pre-bid Conference will be held on June 15, 2004, 2:00 P.M. at the above address.

PNOC EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, or to accept such bids or to award any part thereof to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to PNOC-EC.

This publication is also posted in our website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph and in the DBM website at www.procurementservices.net

(Sgd.) E.S. San Jose
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 23, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Makati City

ELENITA F. SANTIAGO
Petitioner,
– versus –
MURIEL B. SANTIAGO,
Respondent,
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Intervenor
x- -x

SSC CASE NO. 12-15611-03

SUMMONS

MADAM MURIEL B. SANTIAGO

GREETINGS!

You are hereby required to file within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this Summons with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission, 12th Floor, SSS (Makati) Building, 6782 Ayala Avenue corner Rufino Street (formerly Herrera Street), Makati City, your Answer to the Petition filed by petitioner Elenita F. Santiago, through her counsel Atty. Imelda F. Aquino, for benefits accruing from the death of SSS member Jaime B. Santiago.

You are further required to serve a copy of your Answer upon the petitioner through her counsel, Atty. Imelda F. Aquino, at Ground Floor, Garland Condominium, 350 A. Villegas Street, Ermita, Manila, and upon the SSS through the Senior Vice-President, Legal and Collection, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

If you fail to answer within the time prescribed above, the Hearing Commissioner, may upon motion of the petitioners or *motu-proprio*, declare you in default and shall forthwith proceed to receive the petitioner's evidence exparte and thereafter recommend to the Commission either the granting or denial of the petition as the evidence may warrant

SO ORDERED

Makati City, Philippines, April 16, 2004.

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI-April 23, 2004)

Bits Clips

Axe Pulse mall tour

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Batang Malacañang Park 2nd grand reunion

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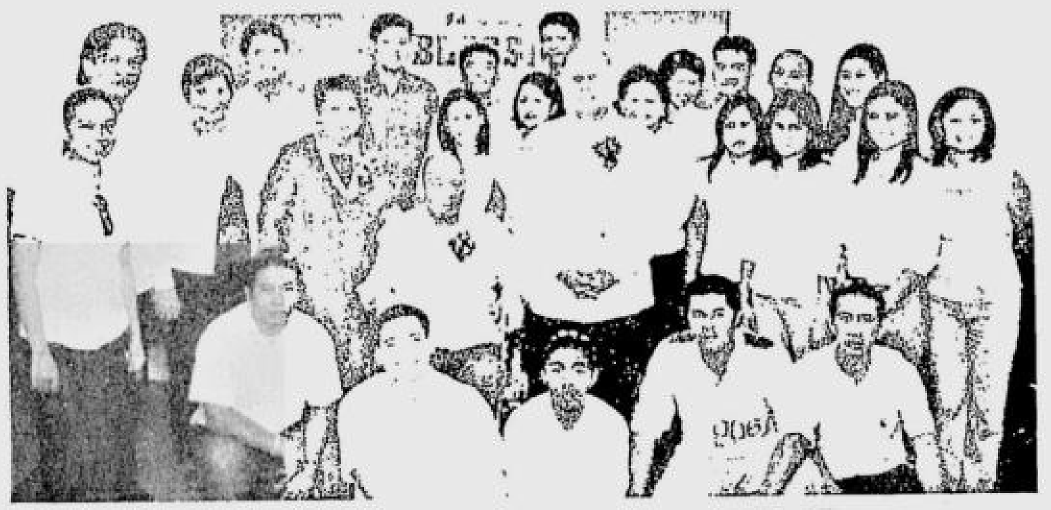
Enduro San Mig Light Race

SAN Mig Light is bringing back this month the Enduro San Mig Light Adventure Race, one of the country's top adventure racing events. This year's edition will kick off in Boracay, Aklan, on April 24, with the country's top adventure racers competing over a course that will test to the limits their athletic ability, mental strength and teamwork. The Enduro San Mig Light Adventure Race Series 2004 features a non-sequential station-to-station system that brings an unpredictable pace to the race. The race is divided into two categories: the 12-to 15-hour elite race for hard-core athletes and the "fun race" for "weekend warriors." For more information, please call the Enduro hotline (02) 412-8660 or visit www.sanmiglight.com.ph to register.

Watsons summer promo

AS A special treat to its customers, Watsons Phils, the largest health and beauty retailer in Asia welcomes the summer with its "Hot, Hot, Hot" promo, where customers can get special discounts on selected products. This sizzling summer treat will run until April 29. Plus, every purchase of any product under the Nivea Sun line entitles a customer to a 50 percent discount on summer shorts available at all Watsons stores. Perfect for outings, these colorful shorts can be had for only P38.50. This promo runs until April 30



FULL CIRCLE COMMUNICATIONS MOVES TO NEW OFFICE

Full Circle Communications recently moved to its new office in RCI Building in Rada Street, Legaspi Village, Makati to better serve its clients. Present at the blessing of the new office were Planters Development Bank (Plantersbank) chair and CEO Ambassador Jesus Tambunting (center) and VP for corporate communications Bobby Banaag, Punongbayan & Araullo's marketing head Gabby Oledan, and former Press Secretary Jesus Sison and wife Amy. FCC president Milen Sison-De Quiros (3rd from left) is shown with her staff.

MOLECULES CELEBRITY ENDORSER VISITS ROBERTSON MALL

Molecules celebrity endorser Marc Acueza visited Robertson Mall in Naga City for their annual promotions. With him are Roseann Obeido, chief executive officer and Marie Ceas, store manager.

PATCA COMMEMORATES 10TH YEAR

The well-regarded Philippine Association of Teachers of Culture and the Arts celebrated its first decade of active and fruitful service to its members and its significant contribution to the Philippine educational system. Patca will hold its 10th annual convention on the timely theme 'Unifying a diverse nation through Filipino culture and the arts' at the Aloha Hotel corner Roxas Boulevard and Quirino Avenue on April 29 and 30. Registration starts promptly at 7 a.m. while the opening ceremonies commence at 8:30. Shown are Patca officers. For more information about the convention, call the PNU Humanities department at 528-0563.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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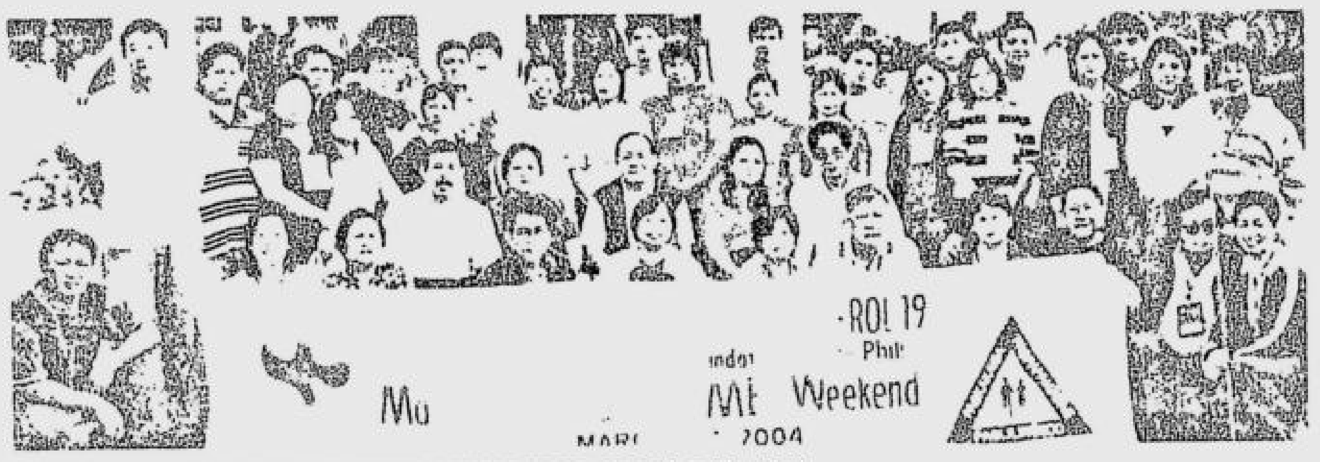

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PNOC

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x - - - - - - - - - - - - x

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IF YOU are one of those who spent their growing years playing in the ground of the Malacañang Park, then you are a certified Batang Malacañang and is cordially invited to a second grand reunion titled "Sa Muling Pagkikita ng mga Batang Malacañang Park" to be held on April 24, 5 p.m. at the Bagong Nayon ng Basketball Court, Bagong Nayon, Antipolo City. To those who will join the grand reunion, please bring two recent ID pictures (1x1) to be placed on the registration forms. For more details, you may call the following: (for Bagong Nayon) William Barredo at 0920-9224402; Carling Sta. Cruz at 647-9328 or Nelia Doloeras at 0916-2214623; (for Pangarap) Popoy Linsagan at 0919-6007579; Bong Someros at 0919-4108716 or Lilian Cuartero Cabotaje at 0917-4736577.

Enduro San Mig Light Race

SAN Mig Light is bringing back this month the Enduro San Mig Light Adventure Race, one of the country's top adventure racing events. This year's edition will kick off in Boracay, Aklan, on April 24, with the country's top adventure racers competing over a course that will test to the limits their athletic ability, mental strength and teamwork. The Enduro San Mig Light Adventure Race Series 2004 features a non-sequential station-to-station system that brings an unpredictable pace to the race. The race is divided into two categories: the 12-to 15-hour elite race for hard-core athletes and the "fun race" for "weekend warriors." For more information, please call the Enduro hotline (02) 412 8660 or visit www.sanmiglight.com.ph to register.

Watsons summer promo

AS A special treat to its customers, Watsons Phils, the largest health and beauty retailer in Asia welcomes the summer with its "Hot, Hot, Hot" promo, where customers can get special discounts on selected products. This sizzling summer treat will run until April 29. Plus, every purchase of any product under the Nivea Sun line entitles a customer to a 50 percent discount on summer shorts available at all Watsons stores. Perfect for outings, these colorful shorts can be had for only P38 50 [illegible] until April [illegible]

Ministry for Youth Affairs stage 'Vote Ko 'To'

SOME 1,500 enthusiastic young people from the Archdiocese of Manila gathered together Feb. 28 in Mater Ecclesia Gym at San Carlos Seminary for an afternoon of interactive youth forum on socio-political issues. With the theme "Vote Ko 'To—Transformative Leadership", the Ministry for Youth Affairs (MYA) headed by Fr. Rufino C. Sescon Jr (MYA minister) and Rev. Msgr. Vicente D. Bauson (Campus Ministry director) organized "Ka-Talk Youth Forum Series 19".

"Vote Ko 'To—Transformative Leadership" aimed to make the young people a creative and non-violent social force in our society. This could be made possible only if they would be listened to, responded to, guided and equipped with the right values and attitudes. MYA believes this is a moral response on the part of the Church to let the voice of the youth be heard and echo to the country's political and church leaders.

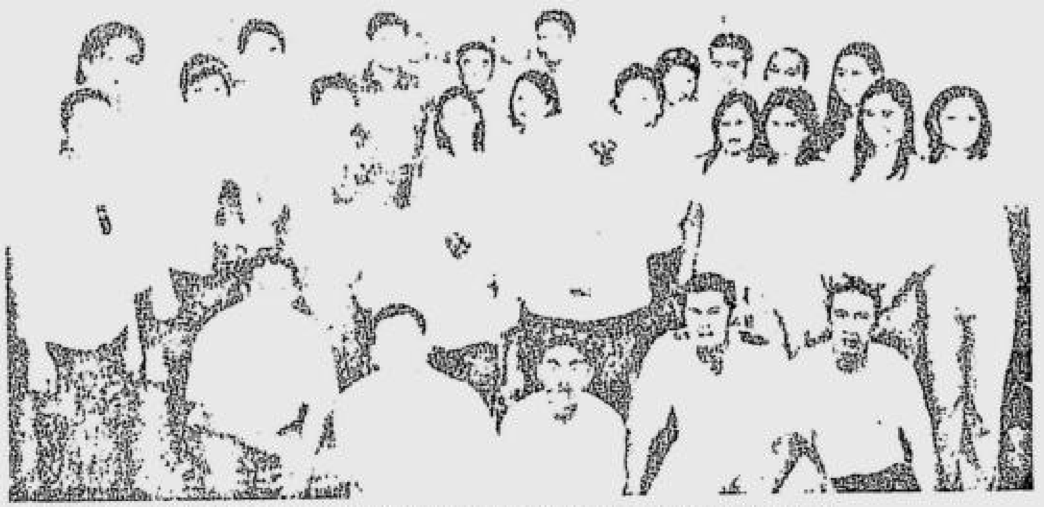
The talented students-members of the Centro Escolar University (CEU) Dramatic Guild did the doxology and opening number.

Part of the program was the conduct of "Youth Choice", wherein participants cast their voted on the choice of President as well as identified two important qualities perceived by them as "conditiones sine qua non" of a national leader. Bro. Dennis Cula SJ, a resource person from "Simbahang Lingkod", gave an informative talk on "Youth and Politics", specifically the role of the youth in the electorate process.

One of the major highlights of the youth forum was the first encounter of the youth with the new Archbishop of Manila His Grace Gaudencio B. Rosales DD. During the event, he challenged the young people to look beyond the May 2004 elections. He invited each of them to join him in his crusade to fight bad governance and institutionalized corruption and to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. "Not by head on collision," remarked Archbishop Rosales, "but by oblique opposition".

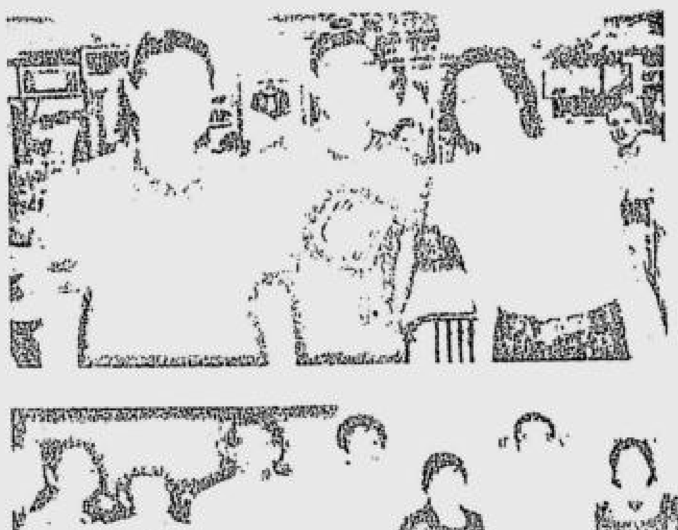
"Very soon,' he further stated, "the Archdiocese of Manila will launch a movement wherein peoples of all walks of life" may join. It aims to "operationalize the love of Jesus Christ" by helping the least among us and is to be titled as 'PnP', which stands for 'Pondo ng Pinoy', 'Pag-Ibig ng Panginoon' at 'Pag-asa ng Pilipino'".

Litz Ong and Mark Marsori, students from De La Salle University, hosted the event. Roxanne Barcelo, a Genesis talent and considered one of the youth's role models, expressed her message to everyone with a song number. Bong Quintana, special events manager of Backroom, directed the successful "Ka-Talk Youth Forum Series 19."



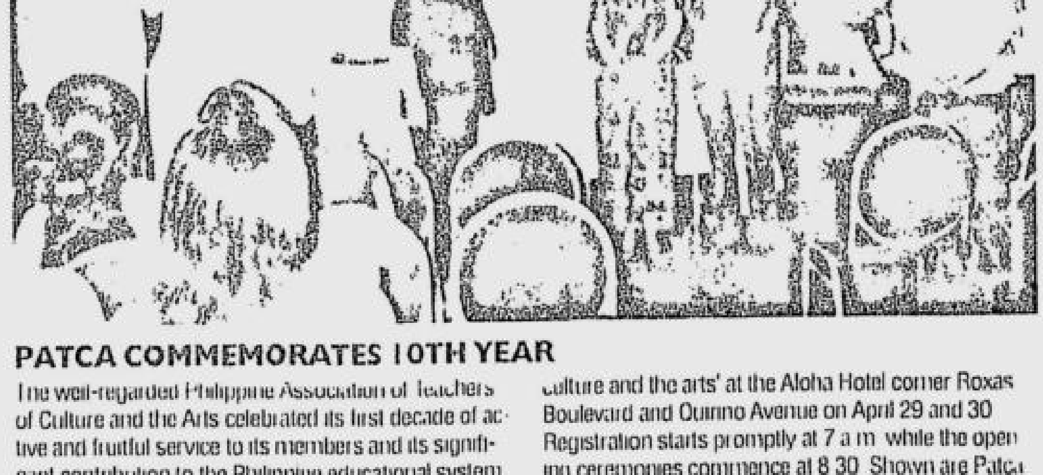
FULL CIRCLE COMMUNICATIONS MOVES TO NEW OFFICE

Full Circle Communications recently moved to its new office in RCI Building in Rada Street, Legaspi Village, Makati to better serve its clients. Present at the blessing of the new office were Planters Development Bank (Plantersbank) chair and CEO Ambassador Jesus Tambunting (center) and VP for corporate communications Bobby Banaag, Punongbayan & Araullo's marketing head Gabby Oledan, and former Press Secretary Jesus Sison and wife Amy. FCC president Milen Sison-De Quiros (3rd from left) is shown with her staff.



MOLECULES CELEBRITY ENDORSER VISITS ROBERTSON MALL

Molecules celebrity endorser Marc Acueza visited Robertson Mall in Naga City for their annual promotions. With him are Roseann Obeido, chief executive officer and Marie Ceas, store manager.



PATCA COMMEMORATES 10TH YEAR

The well-regarded Philippine Association of Teachers of Culture and the Arts celebrated its first decade of active and fruitful service to its members and its significant contribution to the Philippine educational system. Patca will hold its 10th annual convention on the timely theme '[illegible] diverse nation through Filipino culture and the arts' at the Aloha Hotel corner Roxas Boulevard and Quirino Avenue on April 29 and 30. Registration starts promptly at 7 a.m. while the opening ceremonies commence at 8:30. Shown are Patca officers. For more information about the convention, call the PNU Humanities department at 528-0563.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 22, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	48,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46.5	46.5	46	46	202,900
China Banking Corp.	670	670	665	665	990
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39.5	40	39.5	40	16,600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	230,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25	24.75	25	217,300
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	4,200
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	26,400
Security Bank Corp.	17	17	17	17	5,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	24	24	24	24	568,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	200,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	10,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1500	1500	1495	1495	1,270
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23.25	23	23	8,400
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.66	0.68	0.66	0.68	2,380,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	895	900	885	895	41,680
Ipeople Inc.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	60,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	200,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.11	0.145	0.11	0.145	100,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.72	1.74	9,900,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1060	1075	1060	1075	80,780
Ivantage Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	22,030,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	41,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.5	20	19.5	19.75	189,600
Manila Electric Co. B	29	31	29	30	1,476,400
Petron Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.15	3.25	5,312,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	3	3	331,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	340,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	64,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	1,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4	4	4	4	10,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28.5	28.5	28	28	70,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	20.5	20.5	20.25	20.25	40,200
RFM Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59	59	59	59	128,800
San Miguel Corp. B	73	74.5	72.5	74.5	151,000
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	11,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.205	0.26	480,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.7	13,696,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	350,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	60,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	4,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.5	30,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9	9	9	9	2,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.56	0.59	0.56	0.58	24,840,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	500,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	1,700,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	24	26	24	26	3,858,900
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.085	0.06	0.07	1,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	590,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	590,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	10,590,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	150,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.85	0.85	270,000
Solid Group Inc	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	250,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15	15	15	15	3,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	310,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	289,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	70,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	1,070,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.27	110,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	235,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.5	23.5	23.25	23.25	1,055,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PROPERTY					
AYALA LAND INC.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	3,180,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	700,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	2,480,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1,591,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	3,450,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000
SM Development Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	62,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.9	6	5.9	6	9,465,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.08	1.18	1.08	1.18	50,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	180,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	340,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	4,000,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0028	0.003	0.0028	0.003	6,000,000

DISCLOSURES

ARIES Prime Resources Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 30 at 2 p.m.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **A. Soriano Corp.** were Andres Soriano III, Eduardo Soriano, Raymundo Pe, John Gokongwei Jr., Enrique Razon Jr., Roberto Romulo, Oscar Hilado, Warner GN Manning and Jose Ibazeta. Also, the company declared a cash dividend of P0.06 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of May 5 and payable on May 28.

* * *

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 29, 8 a.m. at the ABS-CBN Studio No. 1 of ABS-CBN Broadcast Center Complex, Quezon City. Only stockholders of record as of March 15 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.** were Antonio Go, Rene Buenaventura, Manolo Arzadon, Gerard Lee Co, Anthony Conway, Antonio Cotoco, Corazon de la Paz, Fulgencio Factoran Jr., Jonathan Go, Gamelin Oczon and Walter Wassmer. Independent directors are Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, Roberto Romulo, Juan Santos and Andres Soriano III.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

April 22, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.844595	1.000000	55.7040
Japan	Yen	0.007717	0.009137	0.5090
United Kingdom	Pound	1.499071	1.774900	98.8690
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.108302	0.128230	7.1429
Switzerland	Franc	0.643060	0.761383	42.4121
Canada	Dollar	0.621757	0.736160	41.0071
Singapore	Dollar	0.499878	0.591856	32.9687
Australia	Dollar	0.618162	0.731904	40.7700
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.240363	2.652590	147.7599
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.225226	0.266667	14.8544
Brunei	Dollar	0.498404	0.590110	32.8715
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000098	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.021329	0.025253	1.4067
UAE	Dirham	0.229959	0.272272	15.1666
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.184000	65.9535
Argentina	Peso	0.296090	0.350570	19.5282
Brazil	Real	0.288602	0.341705	19.0343
Denmark	Kroner	0.134378	0.159104	8.8627
India	Rupee	0.019182	0.022712	1.2651
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.222291	0.263193	14.6609
Mexico	New Peso	0.074776	0.088535	4.9318
New Zealand	Dollar	0.526424	0.623286	34.7195
Norway	Kroner	0.120898	0.143143	7.9736
South Africa	Rand	0.125541	0.148641	8.2799
Korea	Won	0.000731	0.000866	0.0482
Sweden	Kroner	0.109195	0.129287	7.2018
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025695	0.030423	1.6947

IMF upgrades . . .

From page B1

the world, compared with 4 percent for the European Union and 5.5 percent for the United States," the report said.

With China's increasing integration and its dual role as a production hub and emerging consumer of final goods, its imports were increasingly rapidly from all trading partners.

The IMF has projected an 8.5 percent growth for China this year, the only country in emerging Asia that was expected to outperform the 7.2 percent average forecast growth for the region.

The newly industrialized Asian economies—Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore—are seen to grow by an average of 5.3 percent, with Hong Kong and Korea posting the best growths of 5.5 percent.

RP stocks close at 3-month high

STOCKS rose to a new three-month high yesterday led by telecom leader PLDT and energy investment firm First Philippine Holdings Corp. as players continued to bet on a victory by President Macapagal-Arroyo in the May 10 elections.

Analysts view Arroyo, a trained economist, as more market-friendly than the main opposition candidate and think her victory would ensure continuity in reforms she has started.

"I think it's really the realization that Arroyo is going to win after one of her rivals went on sick leave from the campaign and the fact that her two opposition rivals have failed to unite. This is boosting market sentiment," said Eagle Equities president Joey Roxas.

Arroyo's closest rival is movie actor Fernando Poe Jr.

Efforts to unite the opposition have foundered on the reluctance of Poe and fellow opposition candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson to step aside in favor of the other.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT), the country's largest phone firm, rose 1.42 percent or P15 to P1,075.

First Philippine Holdings Corp., parent firm of Philippines' dominant electricity distributor Meralco, jumped 8.33 percent or P2 to P26.

"Investors are positioning ahead in those which were battered earlier ... politically-sensitive issues such as First Philippine Holdings, Meralco and Benpres," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan.

The main index gained 10.50 points or 0.68 percent to 1,548.28 points, its highest since Jan. 28. The market is up 7.34 percent so far this year.

Gainers beat losers 28 to 15 as value turnover rose to P572.02 million from P429.95 million.

Reuters

PSBank
PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK
A METROBANK SUBSIDIARY

Peso Time Deposit

Deposit Amount (in pesos)	Term / Current Interest Rates (%)				
	30-60 days	61-90 days	91-180 days	181-364 days	1 year
100,000 - 299,999	5.25	5.50	5.50	5.50	6.50
300,000 - 499,999	5.50	5.75	5.75	6.00	7.00
500,000 - 999,999	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50	8.00
1,000,000 - 4,999,999	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75	8.00
5 million and up	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00

Quoted rates are subject to change without prior notice
Rates are on per annum basis and net of documentary stamp taxes

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Honda Cars Kalookan, Inc. Tel. No. (02) 366 5701, Fax No. 361 8445
Honda Cars Pasig Tel. No. (02) 634 2730, Fax No. 635 2613
Honda Cars Quezon City, Inc. Tel. Nos. (02) 712 6850 to 59, Fax No. 732 8559
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Honda Cars Manila Tel. No. (02) 562 4540, Fax No. 562 4548
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Honda Cars Cebu, Inc. Tel. No. (032) 231 3502, Fax No. (032) 231 4488
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Honda Cars Tarlac, Inc. Tel. Nos. (045) 982 8002 to 04, Fax No. (045) 982 8007
Honda Cars Cagayan Tel. Nos. (088) 858 4010 to 11, Fax No. (088) 858 4015
Honda Cars Gen. Santos, Inc. Tel. Nos. (083) 553 9796 to 97, Fax No. (083) 301 3109
Honda Cars Isabela, Inc. Tel. No. (078) 652 1245, Fax No. (078) 652 1248
Honda Cars Mandaue Tel. No. (032) 422 3700, Fax No. (032) 422 3000

OUTSIDE OF METRO MANILA

Roadshow prods SMEs to replicate best and brightest

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—"You don't need to reinvent the wheel" is a cliché that could spell big bucks for a business community that is all but ignored by the country's top financial managers.

Business gurus are trying to drive the 800,000-strong micro, small and medium-scale businesses in the country down the road to franchising, after noting that their trade has been the hub of investments coming from overseas Filipino workers.

The first franchising roadshow held in Baguio in March wants to help guide OFW investor-led SMEs in replicating countryside businesses that have become popular in their hometowns, says Marivic Matias, vice president for franchising of Surex International.

Surex is a logistics service provider and courier service that sponsored the roadshow. It is part of a series that will go around various provinces in Luzon.

"Based on the research we did, most of the OFWs end up losing their money to (ventures that are no better than a simple) *sari-sari* store," Matias says in Filipino.

But most of the local SMEs they invest in offer good services or produce export-quality products that never breach the mainstream markets, simply because their capital would not sustain a national expansion, says Armando Bartolome, president of the GMB Franchise Developers.

Franchising, he says, allows them to tap a new investment source. These investments are no longer limited to food like the most popular hamburger chains.

Bartolome says even taxi services can now be franchised, as long as the organization provides a clear system that can be replicated down to its minute details to ensure sufficient income without the necessary "trial-and-error" burden of new untested ventures.

BUTZ Bartolome

Documents from the Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. show there are at least 650 active franchise networks in the country today. About 340 of these are homegrown, which, Bartolome says, is a very good number.

He says franchising was already operating in the country in 1910 with Singer Sewing Machine.

Manila firms first took active part in franchising when A&W penetrated the local market in 1936, and when the local Pancake House first stirred up metropolitan interest in 1972.

Bartolome said the Philippine Pancake House was started by a group of Catholic nuns who sustained it the longest among other franchise brand names like Mercury Drugstore.

The American division of Shakey's saw the retail potentials of the country and started a new franchising trend in 1995. About 60 US brand products and establishments like McDonald's, Wendy's, and Burger King expanded exponentially around the country in the last nine years.

Homegrown outfits immediately followed suit and franchised laundromats, day care centers, and repair centers in 1997.

Last month's franchising roadshow in Baguio featured unheard-of homegrown products like Papa Heinz, a small pizza parlor designed by immigrant Heinz Hammerling and his Filipino wife, Joyce, which managed to open franchise outlets as far as Romblon.

Even rotisserie fabricator J. Abad Santos Metalcraft Marketing exhibited its wares to draw potential franchise investors from the city.

Bartolome, who is also a director of the Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. (Affi), said the government's obsession with blue-chip investments glosses over these grassroots resource.

Armando Galimba, Cordillera director of the Department of Trade and Industry, has been preaching the value of countryside SMEs to various local governments for decades. But in January, he complained to Finance Secretary Julieta Amatong during the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) economic briefing when the national figures failed to account for SME accomplishments in the national gross domestic product.

Galimba said SMEs still represent 99.6 percent of the country's business population.

The DTI, however, has not considered franchising as an alternative window for SME growth.

This is because the government still needs to devise a bureaucracy that can regulate franchise networks, Bartolome points out.

Outside the successes of Jollibee Foods Corp. and the International Family Food Services Inc.'s Shakey's restaurants, the country is beset with failed franchise networks that government fail to regulate, he revealed.

Worse, Bartolome said, many of these failures were due to bad products that unscrupulous businessmen sell to investors for only P10,000.

Without a tested system, most of these pseudo-franchises fall within months.

The new CTRP

TAX-FILES

By Ma. Fides A. Balili and Ruby R. Sison
SGV & Co.

THERE is a new CTRP—and we don't mean another Comprehensive Tax Reform Program! The new CTRP is the Centennial Taxpayers Recognition Program which the BIR launched on Feb. 27, 2004 via Revenue Memorandum Order (RMO) 7-2004.

The CTRP's goal is quite simple and understandable: it is to encourage taxpayers to increase their actual tax payments to help the BIR meet its P477 billion revenue goal for 2004, which is P52 billion more than actual collections in 2003. The 2004 goal requires the BIR to grow overall collections by one percent or four percentage points more than the eight growth realized in 2003.

Here's the chance now to help the BIR meet, if not exceed, its revenue target a second year.

Who can vie for the award? The CTRP is open to (a) all corporations following the calendar year of reporting, and (b) all individuals engaged in business or considered mixed income earners.

How to qualify for the award

To qualify for the selection process, a taxpayer must fulfill, in the minimum, all following requirements: *(See table below.)*

A candidate for the Centennial Award whose correct/accurate income tax payment will result in a shortfall or gap in the required growth rate and ratio may opt to make up for the shortfall or gap, by making a voluntary additional payment. The voluntary additional payment should, when added to the correct tax payable, meet the required growth rate and income to gross sales ratio.

For purposes of calculating the above amounts/ratios, only tax payments actually paid in cash as shown in the income tax return and quarterly income tax payments will be considered. Creditable withholding taxes, which are properly supported by a certificate of tax withheld (BIR Form 2307), will be considered as cash payments. Payments by tax credit certificates (TCCs)/tax debit memos (TDMs) are considered as non-cash payments.

Benefits of centennial taxpayers

Centennial taxpayers will be recognized and honored during the BIR's centennial anniversary celebration on Aug. 1, 2004, and will be listed in an honor roll to be published in a national newspaper. In addition, they will be given—

1) A centennial taxpayer's trophy

2) A centennial honor taxpayer's card which will entitle the taxpayer to special attention in any official transaction with any BIR or Department of Finance office. As other donor establishments and agencies participate in the CTRP, the benefits of the card will be grown.

3) Priority/availment of the BIR's various e-services, such as electronic filing and payment systems, e-submission and e-payee.

In addition to the above benefits, the TOP centennial taxpayers—i.e., those with the highest weighted score for percentage increase and absolute peso amount increase in tax payment—will be given the protection 1st priority in audit and investigation for 2003 for all tax payments, which may only be undertaken upon careful evaluation and authorization by the BIR commissioner.

How to participate

To participate in the CTRP, corporate taxpayers should file their 2003 income tax return using BIR Form 1702, or BIR Form 1701 for individuals engaged in business, on or before April 15, 2004. When an additional voluntary payment is needed to fill the shortfall or gap in the required growth rate and ratio, the taxpayer should accomplish the centennial voluntary contribution and waiver of refund form (BIR Form 0605-100), to be filed with the income tax return. Finally, the taxpayer should accomplish the centennial participation form which may be photocopied from RMO 7-2004 or downloaded from the BIR's website (www.bir.gov.ph).

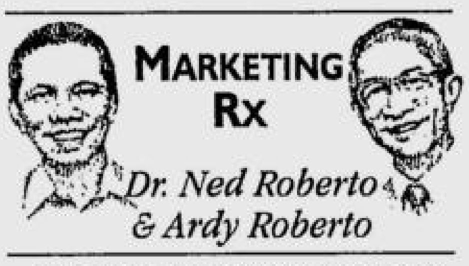
Supporting documentary requirements are photocopies of: 2002 and 2003 financial statements; quarterly and final income tax return/s filed for 2002; quarterly income tax returns for 1st to 3rd quarters of 2003; interim financial statements for 1st quarter of 2004.

Winner selection

The right to make the final selection of the centennial awardees rests with the BIR management committee (Mancom), to insure that only deserving taxpayers are given this award. Notwithstanding that the taxpayer meets the qualifications described above, the Mancom may decide not to grant the award if, for example, verified derogatory information (denunciations) against the taxpayer covering 2003 has been officially filed with the BIR, or the taxpayer has verified tax discrepancies for 2003 as obtained from a third party information.

Payment for Tax Type	For Period	Growth Rate at least	Compared to Payment/ Ratio for Period
Income tax	January to December 2003	20%	January to December 2002
Income tax	October to December 2003	25%	October to December 2002
Income tax	January to March 2004	25%	January to March 2003
Income tax	For business entities, ratio of income tax payment to gross sales: -for January to Dec 2003 -for January to March 2004	At least equal to:	January to December 2002 ratio January to March 2003 ratio
VAT	VAT actually paid to BIR for taxable year 2003	Equal to or greater than the higher of:	(a) 3% of total sales/ receipts for 2003, or (b) effective VAT rate for 2002
Percentage tax	Ratio of percentage tax actually paid to BIR to gross sales/ receipts for taxable year 2003	Not less than	Ratio of percentage tax actually paid to BIR to gross sales/ receipts for taxable year 2002

Marketing for non-profit causes (or the victims of cell phone theft unite case)



Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

Q: HERE'S an email from Jun Lozada, a concerned citizen, advocate and social marketer who's asking how he can use marketing to get his not-for-profit cause off the ground.

I've been advocating for the protection of the approximately 20 million mobile phone users of this country for the past two years. The issue I was raising is there are simply too many people ... getting injured and worse losing their life over a mobile phone. I have talked to my colleagues in the Telecom companies about it and written the CEOs of these companies as well, but their basic stand is "A stolen phone will simply end up as another customer" which frankly speaking is in fact true! The media personalities I've spoke with are all "personally" supportive but can not commit their companies' support due to the perceived risk of an advertising pull-out by these giant companies. The government officials are likewise very supportive but seem to be more eager of getting our support than giving us their support, although I was able to get a congressman to file a bill supporting the advocacy.

For the meantime, people are still continuing to die, get hurt and get their cell phones stolen.

I was already doubting myself if I really have what it takes to push this advocacy and hopefully save even just one life.

I still continue to do the rounds of schools & universities, Rotary Clubs making them aware of the dangers and what they can do about it, I get to be interviewed by some TV shows once in a while. I know there must be a better way to reach out to the mobile phone public.

How we can possibly lobby to pass a law that will mandate the concerned telecom companies and authorities to implement the necessary technical & operational measures that will totally block access of a stolen phone to the country's mobile phone network, creating a very powerful dis-incentive to a potential mobile phone robber to steal.

A: Your target stakeholders-the telecom industry, media and government legislators are indifferent. Of course they will be indifferent because the target stakeholders that you should be talking to in the first place are not raising a hoot or a howl about the issue. So how do you get them to care enough to do something? Get the 507,000 plus people whose cell phones were stolen to behave indignant instead of accepting of the situation. (According to the National Telecommunication Commission, the half a million stolen phones were just for 2002.)

Having diagnosed your correct and true target stakeholder segment, your next diagnostic step is to undertake an analysis of segment value positioning. The nature of the needed analysis here is contained in its label especially in the term, "value."

Start where the 'customer' is

As with all marketing programs and campaigns, the rule remains the same: always start where your "customer" is, not where you are. So begin with an understanding of why and what values the stakeholder is trying to serve by his or her current behavior.

What value or values are behind mobile phone users' current behavior or, as we have specified it, their non-behavior? Those 507,000 phone owners who lost their mobile phones in 2002 have not syndicated themselves to demand the needed actions and anti-crime measures from mobile phone companies and the government because soon after, they "simply end up as new" or renewed phone customers.

They've taken an accepting attitude toward the lost or theft of their mobile phones. Colleagues and friends upon hearing of their stories actually "blame" them for their loss. ("That's what you get for answering or calling as you're crossing the street." Or "Why do you have to place it on the side of the table when you were in that restaurant?"

What is the value that you are marketing to them if they change behavior and do make the demands for the called-for anti-mobile-phone crime measures? You were saying that those measures will serve the value of demotivating potential mobile phone thieves and thereby prevent mobile phone crimes.

What's obvious is that the right motivating values are not captured by the idea of "demotivating potential phone thieves so that they are prevented from committing mobile phone napping." The fear of mobile phone crimes and the idea of preventing them are not the "right" motivators. The compelling motivator is somewhere else. Finding that is the task of "understanding values." That's social marketing research. Let's illustrate with one or two celebrated cases.

Condom marketing case

In 1970, the senior MRx came back to the Philippines and was appointed as the National Social Marketing Director for the marketing of contraceptives. This included and started with condoms. Research showed that our target condom user was not motivated by our positioning the condom as the "married couple's contribution to solving the country's population problem." Our target user research clearly indicated instead that a husband would use condoms if he found that his wife believes that this was a sincere love gesture from him. In other words, with his use of condom, he is declaring by his action that he wants to play his part in avoiding too frequent and close interval pregnancies that would place the wife at very high risk and so endanger her life.

So we changed the condom positioning in the Population Commission condom campaign in favor of this motivator. It was an instant success. The campaign was so "successful" in moving condom inventories in retail stores that the Catholic Women's League declared a national boycott against the campaign. It's a matter of historical record that this boycott did not stop the continued and widespread use of condoms.

So the lesson is simple. Do user value understanding research. Never assume that you know and understand your stakeholders and the value system that drives their behavior.

If you wish to learn the full details of how to effectively plan and implement a campaign for social marketing for advocacy turn to Philip Kotler, Ned Roberto and Nancy Lee's Social Marketing (California: Sage Publishing, 2003). For how to apply social marketing to local public governance, see Ned Roberto, How to Make Local Governance Work (Makati City: Asian Institute of Management, 2002).

Feedback at MarketingRx@SaltandLightVentures.com. Or text at 0919-314-5412.

Philippine AXA Life posts profits

PHILIPPINE AXA Life Insurance Corp. recorded P19.80 million in statutory profit for 2003.

The company also registered 2003 total premium income of P2.64 billion, with total assets up 49 percent at P6.88 billion. This was attributed to the realization of substantial capital gains in the company's bond portfolio, as well as significant profit contribution from group business and resolute fiscal management. Despite the challenging economic and political environment compounding a fiercely competitive market, regular premium earnings were recorded at P1.15 billion from P972 million in 2002, while single premium earnings were recorded at P1.15 billion from P972 million in 2002, while single premium income reached P1.49 billion.

"All points considered, 2003 was both a challenging and significant year for Philippine AXA Life. Thus far 2003 has been the best year for Philippine AXA Life in terms of being able to generate value through product development," said Victor P. Quisumbing, Philippine AXA Life president and chief executive officer.

In 2003, the company launched the country's first dollar-denominated variable life insurance products in the market—Honey and HoneyPot, while major peso products were improved to cater to a fast-evolving market that demands a more sophisticated level of financial protection.

DAR plans to draw ₱15B from Marcos wealth

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT of Agrarian Reform may now draw on the P38 billion Marcos wealth which the government has recently recovered.

According to Agrarian Reform Secretary Jose Ma. Ponce, the P38 billion has been transferred to the accounts of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Land Bank of the Philippines.

"We were informed by the Bureau of Treasury that we could now tap (the money) and use it for budgetary purposes," Ponce yesterday said in an interview.

The DAR intends to get an initial P15 billion from the so-called Marcos ill-gotten wealth.

The money has been released to the DAR following the Supreme Court's recent issuance of a writ of execution effectively releasing the money to the national government. Of the P38 billion, P30 billion has been earmarked for the DAR. The remaining P8 billion will be used to compensate human rights victims during martial law.

Ponce said the bulk of the P15 billion would be used to acquire lands and pay former landowners whose property had been distributed to farmers under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

He said 70 percent of DAR budget for this year would be used for CARP while the rest would be used to deliver basic support services to agrarian reform communities.

The agency is also set to receive P9 billion in official development assistance (ODA) funds from foreign donors to build more farm-to-market roads and provide support services for agrarian reform communities nationwide.

Ponce said that the governments of Italy, France and Britain as well as the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the Asian Development Bank are willing to co-finance the construction of road networks and provide training assistance to generate rural employment this year.

ODA loans from foreign donors have soft repayment terms. The proposals, however, are still undergoing evaluation by the interagency Investment Coordination Committee.

COMMENTARY

Cordon sanitaire and government failure

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

DURING the ongoing National Vegetable Congress, Alfredo Alangdeo, chair of the Benguet Vegetable Farmers and Distributors Cooperatives, expressed his dismay over the government's failure to respond to his request for an investigation of the irregular importation of carrots from China.

Around 80,000 Cordillera carrot farmers were severely affected by the importation. For nine months, their wholesale carrot price went down to P3-P5 a kilo from P15-P20.

Alangdeo said he would file before the Office of the Ombudsman a case against the secretary of the Department of Agriculture for not complying with the legally mandated 15-day limit to respond to his letter.

At the expense of farmers

Alangdeo believes there is no response to his letter because some DA people are protecting a politically connected official who may have unscrupulously made a lot of money at the expense of thousands of poor farmers.

Alangdeo is angry because this is not the first time the DA did not reply to his request for action. On April 23 last year, he submitted such a request, but there was no response.

After six months of irregular carrot importation, which a DA official legitimized even without the required Pest Risk Analysis, Alangdeo joined other farmer leaders in asking Benguet Gov. Raul Molintas for help.

Molintas also wrote a letter to the authorities seeking an investigation.

Alangdeo said that there was again no reply to Molintas' letter, which was stamped as received at the DA Office of the Secretary on Jan. 6, 2004.

In frustration, Alangdeo held a press conference where he distributed documents identifying the erring government officials responsible for importing 1,276 tons of carrots from October to December 2003. Citing the magnitude of the damage done, Alangdeo said the importation constitutes economic sabotage.

Still, there was no DA response.

Finally, Alangdeo on Feb. 19 hand-carried his own letter to the Office of the DA Secretary and had his copy stamped as officially received.

In that letter, he cited the mandated 15 working day limit for a response. It has been 78 working days since Governor Molintas submitted his letter, and 46 working days since Alangdeo hand-carried his own, but there has been no response. Alangdeo wants justice for the 80,000 carrot farmers who suffered greatly.

He believes going to the Ombudsman will finally produce results.

We have since learned that a top DA official had said that he had not seen the letters and therefore could not respond.

Cordon sanitaire

We informed Alangdeo that the performance failure might have been caused by a cordon sanitaire that prevented the official from acting on the request. Alangdeo has agreed to put aside his plan. However, he says that if there is still no response by April 30, he will proceed with his Ombudsman plan.

In the case of the Presidential Agriculture Agenda submitted by the Alyansa Agrikultura to the presidential candidates, a cordon sanitaire may also be causing performance failures.

This agenda was developed through nationwide consultations for over a year. It has both overall and sectoral recommendations, but six are identified as of highest priority.

Presidential candidates

Presidential candidates Raul Roco, Panfilo Lacson and Eddie Villanueva apparently had no cordon sanitaires that prevented them from responding to this agenda and personally meeting with the Alyansa leaders. All three agreed with the agenda with minor modifications.

They also agreed with the six high priority items, except for Senator Lacson who expressed reservations about the restoration of DAO 17 which delimits municipal waters for small fisher priority.

Fernando Poe Jr. apparently has a cordon sanitaire. We informed him personally that some farmer leaders felt he was pro-rich than pro-poor. This was because he unhesitatingly met with business leaders, but delayed meeting the biggest coalition of farmers and fisherfolk with 38 national and local federations and organizations. Poe said he did not know of Alyansa's letter asking for a meeting. He then said he wanted the meeting and would schedule it as soon as possible. It is hoped that no one would block his response to a follow-up letter on this.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has likewise not responded to a similar Alyansa letter. The Alyansa is also waiting for a response from her office.

It is important that there be no cordon sanitaires in this important area. The Alyansa has announced that it will inform the public of the presidential candidates' stands on agriculture issues on May 3. For example, if a candidate has no response on the agenda item allocating coco levy funds solely for the benefit of the 3.7 million small coconut farmers, these farmers would be advised not to vote for this candidate. A possibility is that this candidate does not wish to respond because he may offend financial backers who want a large portion of the coco levy funds for themselves. The problem then will not be a cordon sanitaire but the presidential candidate himself or herself.

Good faith

As in the case of Alangdeo and the Office of the DA Secretary, we should not be too quick to accuse the other of lack of sympathy or "malasakit." Perhaps the official does not even know of the matter because of a cordon sanitaire. We should rather assume good faith and penetrate the cordon sanitaire so we can work more effectively and fully support the government official. The official must in turn eliminate any cordon sanitaire that is causing government failures that may be unfairly attributed to him or her. Corrective action must be immediately taken so that government failures will turn into the successes our people need so badly today.

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry, and former chair and Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635).

DA to fund post harvest facilities in N. Luzon

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture is all set to sink in P25 million for the construction of postharvest facilities for Northern Luzon farmers.

According to Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo, the amount would be tapped from the Agriculture Competitiveness Enhancement Fund of the DA.

Part of the P25 million would also be used to buy cold storage facilities and vans, to lengthen the shelf life of vegetables coming from Northern Luzon, Lorenzo said.

Small vegetable farmers have been complaining to the Department of Agriculture that their produce comprised of cabbages and carrots could not be transported to other cities due to lack of logistical facilities.

"In turn, we sell our vegetables to middlemen often at a loss or very low prices because we would not want them to rot," Benguet Gov. Raul Molintas said in a separate interview.

Molintas noted that the vegetable farmers also have to contend with the influx of cheap vegetables from China.

In 2002 alone, the country imported about $6.4 million (P328.7 million) worth of fresh/chilled vegetables as compared to $5.8 million (P295 million) the previous year, according to the National Statistics Office.

The figure excludes those that have entered the country through illegal means (smuggling).

Molintas, who has led efforts in 2002 to raise the tariffs on imported vegetables, said that despite the GATT deadline, both the United States and Japan continued to subsidize their agriculture sectors by opening access to low-interest funds and equipment.

The government recently pegged vegetable tariff imports to a minimum of 25 percent and a maximum of 40 percent.

"But much remains to be done to make the local vegetable industry competitive," Molintas said. The supply chain must be addressed. For instance, there is a need to enhance production technologies to further increase supply and improve quality." *Christine A. Gaylican*

ERC hands down guidelines for power distributors

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission on Wednesday issued the guidelines on how distribution utilities will recover the generation component of their costs through their retail rates.

The guidelines provide clear-cut rules on the "full recovery of prudent and reasonable economic costs related to the generation component" that power distributors were charging on their captive market.

Also, the guidelines will serve as a basis for the ERC's approval of future generation contracts.

The new order paves the way for the formulation of supplemental agreements for existing contracts that National Power Corp. has with distribution utilities, which will include the quantity and capacity of energy being contracted as well as the regional rate schedule.

For distributors with no existing power supply contracts with Napocor, they can forge transition supply contracts (TSCs) with the state firm.

These TSCs are seen to help Napocor dispose of the generation assets that it has lined up for privatization as these contracts will assure potential investors of a ready market for the electricity that they will market upon takeover of the state firm's power plants.

However, Napocor and National Transmission Corp. (Transco) will first have to file with the ERC a regional TSC availability record containing actual generation and transmission capacities per region.

Napocor's regional generation capacity should take into consideration energy taken up by existing contracts and supplemental agreements, the capacity to be taken up under pending TSCs, and that which is still available to distributors under their TSCs.

Limitations on generation, like those related to fuel supply, should also be taken into account.

Transmission constraints should include the maximum power transfer capability of Napocor plants to each potential buyer per region, taking into consideration the applicable system reliability and security parameters.

The recovery of generation costs within a distribution firm's retail rates will then be pegged on the regional TSC rate that the Napocor charges.

"In determining the appropriate limitation on recovery of costs of the generation component in the retail rates, the applicable regional TSC shall be for the same period as the generation capacity and energy arrangement for which the distribution utility is seeking recovery of costs in the retail rate," the guidelines stated.

Power distributors cannot recover any generation component in excess of the regional TSC rate, unless approved by the ERC.

Also, recovery of costs will be limited to the amount of electricity available under the regional TSC availability record.

Costs incurred for electricity in excess of that in the regional TSC availability record cannot be recovered unless approved by the ERC, using a cost determination methodology that takes into account various technical, environmental, economic and financial criteria.

Transco wants to put up transmission line in Panay

AS PART of the effort to avert a power crisis in the Visayas, the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) has submitted a proposal to create a new transmission line in Panay.

Once approved the P2.1-billion Panay Backbone Transmission Project, a 138-kilovolt transmission line will be constructed from Panitan to Nabas, extending Transco's power delivery services toward the northern and southern parts of Panay.

The project is expected to be completed in 2007. It is expected to complement the Panay-Boracay interconnection project under Transco's Small Island Submarine Interconnection Development (SISID) Program.

Transco president and chief executive Alan Ortiz said in a recent interview that they would present the project before the technical board of the National Economic and Development Authority's Investment Coordination Committee on May 5.

Should the project get the nod of the Neda-ICC technical board, Ortiz said it would then be submitted to the Cabinet-level Neda-ICC for final approval.

Ortiz explained that consolidating the Panay backbone was one of the next steps the state firm would take as part of its effort to prevent a power shortfall in the region.

Right now, some areas in the Visayas are already experiencing rotating brownouts due to lack of actual capacity and transmission problems.

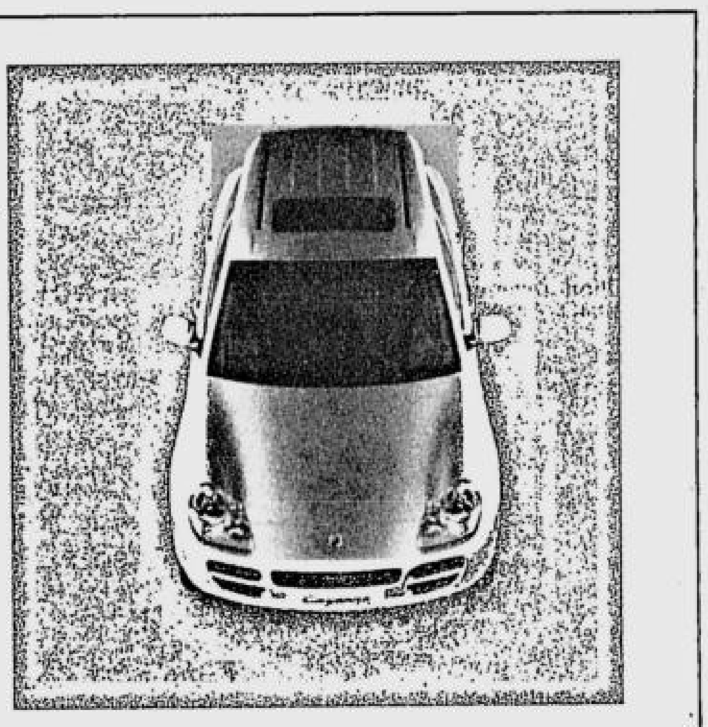
Transco has lined up a number of projects under its Visayas Transmission Augmentation Program, or Project: VISTA, to ensure that delivery of electricity from power-rich areas to power-hungry ones would be more efficient and reliable.

Some of these projects are the P4.4-billion Cebu-Negros-Panay (CNP), the P3.7-billion Leyte-Cebu, and the P2-billion Cebu-Mactan interconnection projects.

Ortiz said bidding for the CNP project would be opened by next week after the policy-making Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas approves a loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to finance the project.

The Leyte-Cebu project last month secured a $56.4-million loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, representing 85 percent of the total project cost.

The remaining P600 million would be sourced from local bond placements to be handled by the Development Bank of the Philippines. *Abigail L. Ho*



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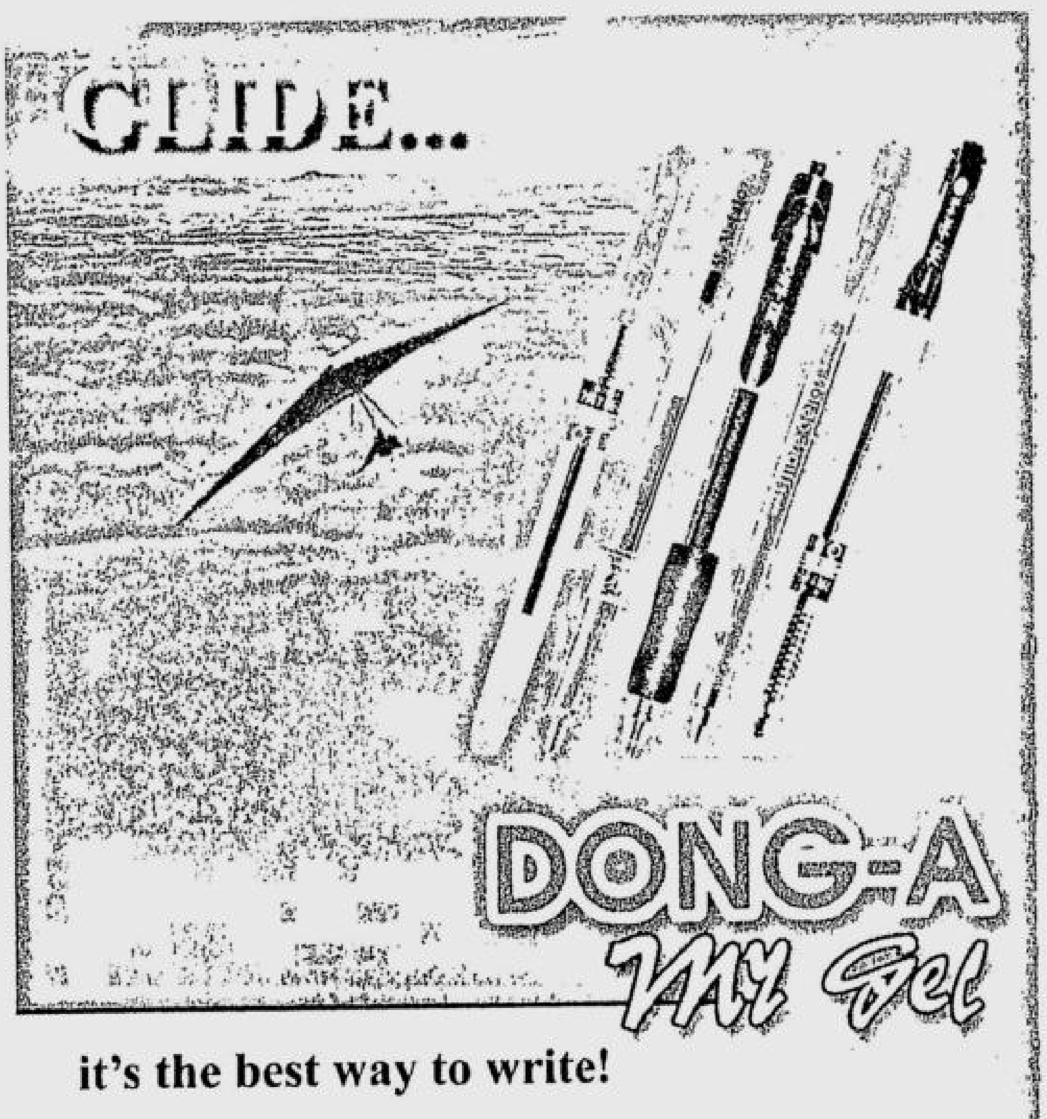

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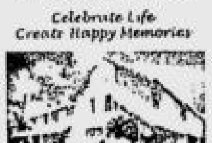

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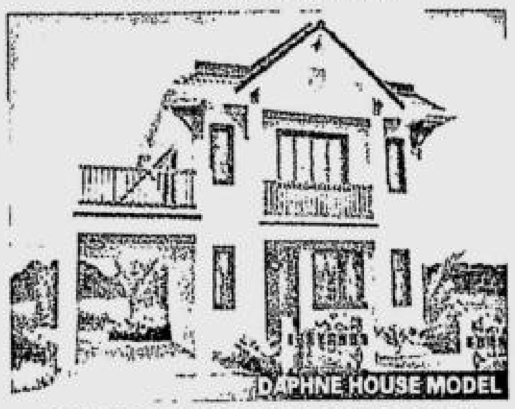

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1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

1.5% 1HR CAR LOAN 3743803

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

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National Power Corporaton

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC-MMSD 2004-007

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-MMSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements.

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No./Inquiry No.	ABC
I	May 7, 2004 10:00 AM Kañao Room	Mechanical Parts for Bantayan DPP	PB031027-MMJP9404 (PB2) HO-BBD-03-0071 HO-BBD-03-0072	P 2,324,000.00
II		Hauling Services and Rental of Storage Tanks including Depot Pumping Facilities for Catanduanes/ Masbate Operations	PB040407-MMSB0659 (PB2) HO-CAT-04-0020	P 8,520,000.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule II	April 27, 2004	10:00 AM	Kañao Function Room

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Materials Management Services Division, Materials Management Dept., of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel. No. 9245357/9245477 upon payment of non-refundable fee of Php500.00 per schedule starting on **April 16, 2004**. No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, MMSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration issued by PSD will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with the IRR of Republic Act No. 9184.

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/ Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit - One Percent (1%), Bank Guarantee - One and a half percent (1.5%),Surety Bond - Two and a half percent (2.5%), penal and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids; and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD-NPC

(PDI - April 16 & 23, 2004)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that BOI Certificate of Registration No. EP 98-104 issued on 11 July 1996 as New Producer of Buttons under the name of CEBU BUTTON CO. INC. was lost.

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CEBU PROPERTY VENTURES & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

NOTICE OF REGULAR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the regular annual stockholders' meeting of CEBU PROPERTY VENTURES AND DEVELOPMENT CORP. will be held at the Cebu Country Club, Banilad, Cebu City on FRIDAY, 30 APRIL 2004 at 3:00 P.M. with the following:

AGENDA

1. Determination of Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
3. Annual Report of Officers
4. New Business
    4.1 Ratification of all Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management adopted in the ordinary course of business during the preceding year.
5. Election of Directors (including the Independent Directors)
6. Election of Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Stockholders of record as of **04 February 2004** shall be the stockholders entitled to vote at this meeting. As per By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Books of the Corporation will be closed from **10 to 30 April 2004**, inclusive.

Makati City, 19 March 2004.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RENATO O. MARZAN
Corporate Secretary

CEBU HOLDINGS INC.
AN AFFILIATE OF AYALA LAND, INC.

NOTICE OF REGULAR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the regular annual stockholders' meeting of CEBU HOLDINGS, INC., will be held at the Cebu Country Club, Banilad, Cebu City on FRIDAY, 30 APRIL 2004 at 10:00 A.M. with the following:

AGENDA

1. Determination of Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
3. Annual Report of Officers
4. New Business
    4.1 Ratification of all Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management adopted in the ordinary course of business during the preceding year.
5. Election of Directors (including the Independent Directors)
6. Election of Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Stockholders of record as of **01 March 2004** shall be the stockholders entitled to vote at this meeting. As per By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Books of the Corporation will be closed from **09 to 30 April 2004**, inclusive.

Makati City, 19 March 2004.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RENATO O. MARZAN
Corporate Secretary

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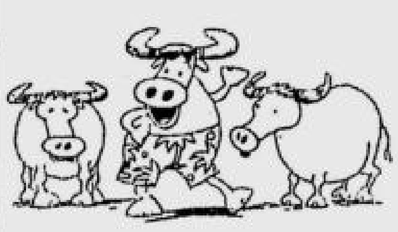

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– LEA

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PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE

INVITATION TO BID

The Privatization and Management Office (PMO) is offering for sale through public bidding, on an *"as-is-where-is"* basis the following National Government (NG)/National Power Corporation (NPC) properties:

LOT/DESCRIPTION		INDICATIVE PRICE
LOT A	Vacant/Parking Lot with an area of 2,798 square meters located at Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. corner Tindalo St., Makati City	P 328,765,000
LOT B	Vacant/Parking Lot with an area of 437 square meters located at Amorsolo corner dela Rosa Sts., Makati City	29,497,500

Sealed bids will be received on Tuesday, May 25, 2004 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. and immediately thereafter, the bids shall be opened and tabulated in the presence of the bidders at the PMO Conference Room, 6th floor, Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties are advised to deal directly with the PMO Marketing Department. Authenticated bidding documents together with the Asset Specific Catalogue, may be secured from PMO for a nominal fee of P2,500.00.

In the event that the public bidding becomes a failure, the PMO reserves the right to accept proposals for the subject assets.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Matthew R. de Guzman at telephone numbers 817-8762 or 818-4733.

(PDI--April 21, 22 & 23, 2004)

UNDP

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Contracting of Services for the project - Transforming the Philippine National Police (PNP) to a More Capable, Effective and Credible Police Force (Phase 2) under the Judicial Reform Program: Access to Justice by the Disadvantaged (PHI/02/007)"

The Development Support Services Center (DSSC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would like to invite interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project - Transforming the Philippine National Police (PNP) to a More Capable, Effective and Credible Police Force (Phase 2) under the Judicial Reform Program: Access to Justice by the Disadvantaged (PHI/02/007)

The project aims to translate the Philippine National Police's vision for a "professional police force working in partnership with a responsive community for the attainment of a safe place to live, work and do business in" into concrete mechanisms that will create the enabling environment within which the desired police force can emerge and continue to be an effective agency of the law enforcement pillar of the criminal justice system.

The project therefore requires the services of a consulting firm that will assess the PNP in relation to its formal structure, mandate, functions, programs and new challenges. Also, they will be required to review various factors that enhance or inhibit the effective pursuit of its legal mandate. The review would entail the use of diverse organizational development, human resource management and psychosocial approaches. Moreover, the consulting firm would also conceptualize a developmental project based on the above instruments, which would include the description of the project objectives, scope, content, outputs and expected results. It would also include the identification of a framework and preparation of a plan for a pilot project implementation.

Requirements for Eligibility and Bidding Documents may be secured, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Philippine Pesos Five Hundred (PhP500.00)** from the following address:

Development Support Services Center
United Nations Development Programme
7th Floor NEDA sa Makati Building
106 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City (via courier)
Tel. No. (632) 892 0611 local 386
Fax No. (632) 816 4061/893 2610

The abovementioned document will be released to all interested parties strictly from 26 April - 4 May 2004 only.

UNDP reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein, accept the bid and award the contract to the most advantageous offer to the UNDP based on UNDP criteria. UNDP assumes no obligation or responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred for the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made for this Contract.

(Sgd.) **ETHELIND CAPUNO**
Manager, DSSC

(PDI–April 23, 2004)

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RODOLFO D. DOMINGO

Peacefully joined our Lord
on April 21, 2004
at the age of 72.

His body lies in state at Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat.

His family requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:6

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Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
CORPORATE OFFICE
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City 1105, Philippines

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) invites interested parties (the "Applicants") to pre-qualify and bid for the **MWSS Treated Bulk Water Supply Project** (the "Project") to supply a total of 400 MLD treated bulk water to the MWSS Concession Areas. The Project will be implemented pursuant to Republic Act No. 7718, the "Philippine BOT Law" and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) under the Build-Operate-and-Transfer (BOT) contractual arrangement.

Preparation of the Technical Study and Tender Documents for this Project was undertaken with the assistance of the B-O-T Center of the Department of Trade and Industry, and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Project Proponent shall be responsible for identifying the proposed water source(s), financing, feasibility study, detailed engineering design, construction, and operation and maintenance of the proposed treated bulk water supply system.

A complete set of Pre-qualification Documents may be obtained upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P1,500.00), starting **April 23, 2004**, at the address below:

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
Office of the Senior Deputy Administrator
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines

Application for pre-qualification should be submitted in sealed envelopes, either delivered by hand, courier, or by registered mail, to the above address not later than 5:00 p.m. of **June 15, 2004**, and clearly marked "Applications to Pre-qualify for the MWSS Treated Bulk Water Supply Project". Reference time shall be the bundy clock located at the same office indicated above. Late submission shall not be accepted.

A pre-qualification conference will be held at 2:00 p.m. on **May 14, 2004**, at the conference room at the MWSS Sr. Deputy Administrator.

MWSS reserves the right to reject or accept any application, or to cancel the pre-qualification process and reject all applications. MWSS shall neither be liable for any such actions, nor be under any obligation to inform the applicant of the grounds for these actions.

MWSS assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of their application.

(Sgd.) **ORLANDO C. HONDRADE**
Administrator

(PDI - April 16, 23 & 30, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. 2004-012

PD Ref No. PB040218-RM0032 / PR No.: ITASD-03-00423

1 The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TransCo), BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE (BAC) FOR HEAD OFFICE, invites local bidders / contractors to apply for eligibility who are
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnership duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines, or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA)

The abovementioned contractors should have the following valid License and Registration Particulars issued by PCAB

License at least "Category D"
Registration : at least "SMALL B"

2 Contract SUPPLY OF LABOR, TOOLS, MATERIALS AND OTHER INCIDENTALS NECESSARY FOR THE REHABILITATION OF WORKSHOP ROOM AT TRANSCO BUILDING NO. 2.

3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all labor, materials, supplies, tools, equipment and other incidentals necessary for the REHABILITATION OF WORKSHOP ROOM AT TRANSCO BUILDING NO. 2. Please refer to the attached Scope of Work and specification

The budget for the Contract to be Bid is *P905,602.00* from the Internal Cash Generation of the TransCo.

4 Application for Eligibility and Eligibility Forms will be available for issuance starting April 17, 2004 to April 30, 2004 at The BAC Secretariat, National Transmission Corporation, MMD, G/F Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon presentation of original PCAB License and a payment of non-refundable fee of TWO HUNDRED Pesos (P 200.00) per copy.

5 Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent, duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, Eligibility Forms, documents and statements shall be on or before *3:00 PM of May 3, 2004* and shall be submitted at the registration office and address mentioned above. If the said date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Eligible bidders shall be notified on or before May 10, 2004

6. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by eligible bidders from May 11, 2004 to May 25, 2004 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of THREE HUNDRED Pesos (Php300.00)

7 Pre-Bid Conference for the submission of Technical and Price Proposals will be held on May 19, 2004, 2:00 PM at National Transmission Corporation, Admin Conference Room, G/F, Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

8 Submission of Technical and Price Proposals of eligible bidders shall be at 10:00 AM on May 31, 2004 at National Transmission Corp., Admin Conference Room, G/F, Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. The technical proposal will be opened immediately in the presence of Bidder's representative who chooses to attend

9 All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Act.

10 TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government

11. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address

(Sgd.) A.G. LABAYANI
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - April 17 & 23, 2004)

AUCTION

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PCB MANUFACTURING MACHINERY / INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT; MACHINE TOOLS; VEHICLES; OFFICE FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT

ON: Tuesday 27th April 2004 - 10:30am Sharp

PCB MANUFACTURING MACHINERY / INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT - COLIGHT 1330 UV Exposure Machine, TA-SHIANG UV Exposure Machine; GEIRBER Crescent/30 Laser Plotter; GENERAL AUTOMATION P.D.A CNC Router w/ Control Panel; ATMA Semi-Auto Printer, Clean Room Air Shower Assembly; SUNFORT Dry Film Photoresist; NYPHO Dry Film Photoresist, ULAND Haze Remover Paste

MACHINE TOOLS - ISAKI Air Cooled Diesel Engine Welding Generators (6); ISAKI Diesel Engine Generators (4); KITAGAWA Pedestal Drills; Welding Machines, Electric Jack Hammers, Concrete Breakers; Farm Tractors; Water Pumps; Woodworking Machines; BRIDGEPORT Lathe Machine, Ecoline Airjet Chamber, Flexicon Conveyor Assy; Power Saw Machine, BALOOR Grinder/Buffer Machine, etc

VEHICLES - FUSO 1997 Model 45-Seater Tourist Bus

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT - G.E. Circuit Breakers, Distribution Boards; Switch Box Units, etc

OFFICE FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT - SHARP SD-2060 Photocopying Machines (7); SHARP Z-55 Photocopying Machine; FUJI XEROX XS-AAE Vivace 160 Photocopying Machine; TOSHIBA 1560 Photocopying Machine; MITA DC-1556 Photocopying Machine; Executive Office Chairs, Swivel Chairs; Wooden Office Tables; Typewriting Desks; Wooden Pedestal Drawers; Steel Lateral Filing Cabinets, 4-Drawer Steel Filing Cabinets; Modular Office Partitions, Computer Monitors; Keyboards; CD-Rom Drives; Printers; Facsimile Machines, etc

MISCELLANEOUS - CARRIER 38AK-D34 Airconditiong Compressor-Condenser Units (4), ODONTORAMA PC Dental X-Ray, 32" & 24" Diameter Reinforced Concrete Pipes, TIMBERTEX Wooden Panels, Vacuum Cleaners; Bottlejacks; BAUSCH & LOMB Microscope; UNITRON Microscope, Welding Masks, Socket Wrench Sets, Plotters, COMFAC 5 kva Transformers; RELIANCE 30HP Induction Motor, Drive/Gear Motors, Diverter Valves, etc

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C/O HILON COMPOUND - BO. MAYAPA, CANLUBANG, LAGUNA
VIEWING DATE: MON. 26TH APRIL 2004 9:00AM - 5:00PM & MORNING OF SALE DAY
REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT: PHP20,000 (UPON REGISTRATION)

GoIndustry Henry Butcher

HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES INC.
Rm. 102 Jubiland Bldg., 670 Edsa, Pasay City, Philippines
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E-mail: manila@henrybutcher.com
Website: www.henrybutcher.com/www.goindustry.com

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-018

PD Ref. No.: PB040309-EL0042

1 The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO – BAC) – HEAD OFFICE invites local bidders contractors to apply for eligibility who are
   a Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, or
   b Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines, or
   Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines, or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract. Provided, however, that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%), or
   e Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA)

2 Procurement of :

Schedule	Description	Quantity	Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
I	DESKTOP PC	20 UNITS	P 1,700,000.00
II	DESKTOP PC	1 UNIT	P 60,000.00
III	MOBILE PC	3 UNITS	P 375,000.00
IV	PC MONITOR	3 UNITS	P 24,000.00
V	DIGITAL CAMERA	7 UNITS	P 210,000.00
VI	LASERJET PRINTER (NETWORK)	6 UNITS	P 288,000.00
VII	LASERJET PRINTER (STANDALONE)	2 UNITS	P 70,000.00
VIII	LASERJET PRINTER	1 UNIT	P 75,000.00
IX	INKJET PRINTER (STANDALONE)	12 UNITS	P 180,000.00
X	PRINTER ALL-IN-ONE	2 UNITS	P 56,000.00
XI	LABEL PRINTER	2 UNITS	P 10,000.00
XII	FACSIMILE	2 UNITS	P 36,000.00
XIII	MULTIMEDIA PROJECTOR	4 UNITS	P 1,000,000.00
XIV	SCANNER	3 UNITS	P 45,000.00
XV	FLATBED SCANNER	1 UNIT	P 4,000.00
XVI	HANDHELD SCANNER	1 UNIT	P 5,000.00
XVII	UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY	13 UNITS	P 91,000.00
XVIII	DATABASE SERVER	1 UNIT	P 500,000.00
XIX	EXTERNAL MODEMS	11 UNITS	P 28,600.00
XX	MODEM SWITCH	10 UNITS	P 600,000.00
XXI	CPU	2 UNITS	P 54,000.00
XXII	CPU	1 UNIT	P 68,000.00
XXIII	PC SUBNOTEBOOK ACCESSORIES	3 UNITS	P 30,000.00
XXIV	PC SUBNOTEBOOK ACCESSORIES	3 UNITS	P 6,900.00
XXV	USB MOBILE DISK	4 UNITS	P 14,000.00
XXVI	MULTIMEDIA MEMORY CARD	2 UNITS	P 10,000.00
XXVII	MEMORY CARD READER	1 UNIT	P 2,000.00
XXVIII	COMBO USB FLASH DRIVE	3 UNITS	P 21,000.00
	TOTAL		P 5,373,500.00

3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents that will be issued

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is *P5,373,500.00* to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.

4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting *April 23, 2004 to May 24, 2004* at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) per set

Pre-Bid Conference will be held on *May 13, 2004 at 2:00 P.M.* at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City

6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before *2:00 P.M. of May 25, 2004* at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted

7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184

8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Corporation.

9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) ANTONIO G. LABAYANI
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – April 23 & 30, 2004)

To All Selling Stockholders of Araullo University:

Please bring your valid ID's with picture and signature, TIN, stock certificates and other documents to Araullo University on April 23, 24 and 25, 2004 to facilitate payment on the 28th. Failure to submit the documents on time can cause delay in the release of payment.

(Sgd.) Atty. Marvin B. Aceron

(PDI – April 23, 24 & 25, 2004)

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Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
VIDEOGRAM REGULATORY BOARD
No. 35 Scout Limbaga Street, Bgy. Laging Handa, Quezon City Zip Code 1103
Tel. Nos.: 373-6830 • 374-1393 • Fax: 374-0217

OMB ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR NO. 2004-001

Optical Media Board: Registration and Licensing

Pending the formulation and enactment of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Optical Media Act of 2003 and in order that there will be a continuity in the functions and operations of the new Optical Media Board, the following circular shall be observed in the registration and licensing of optical media establishments.

1. **Registration and Licensing**
   a. All previously registered and licensed optical/magnetic media establishments of any category, which licenses shall expire on December 15, 2005, shall be considered valid subject to corresponding adjustments in terms of fees and requirements as may be required by the Board.
   b. All optical/magnetic media business establishments of any category renewing their licenses shall be issued temporary licenses valid up to December 31, 2004 or until such time that the transition from the VRB to the OMB shall have been completed, subject to corresponding adjustments in terms of fees and requirements as may be issued by the Board or whichever comes first.
   c. All new applicants for optical/magnetic media commercial license shall be issued temporary licenses valid up to December 31, 2004 or until such time that the transition from the VRB to OMB shall have been completed subject to corresponding adjustments in terms of fees and requirements as may be issued by the Board or whichever comes first
2. **Review and Classification of optical / magnetic media**
   All previously reviewed and classified videograms, which commercial permits have not expired are considered valid until December 31, 2004 or until the indicated expiry date or whichever comes first.
3. **Fees and Surcharges**
   All existing fees and surcharges being imposed by the Videogram Regulatory Board shall continue to be adopted until such time that a new schedule of fees shall have been approved by the Optical Media Board.
4. **Forms**
   All application forms, requirements, licenses and permits used and/or issued in the licensing and registration process shall either bear:
   a. The Videogram Regulatory Board logo (until such time that an official logo of the OMB shall have been approved and adopted by the Board)
   b. An informal Optical Media Board logo overlapping the Videogram Regulatory Board logo, or
   c. Optical Media Board logo.
5. **Sanctions and Penalties**
   All establishments which fail to comply with the provisions of this circular shall be subject to criminal and administrative sanctions provided for under the Optical Media Act of 2003.
6. **Publication and Effectivity**
   This administrative circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation

24 March 2004, Quezon City, Philippines.

EDUARDO B. MANZANO
Chairman/Chief Executive Officer

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES SYSTEM
Diliman, Quezon City
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

A. The University of the Philippines Diliman hereby invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility to bid for:

1.)	Contract for Security:	North Sector: 218 South Sector: 130	Security personnel
2.)	Contract for Janitors:	North Sector: 175 South Sector: 157	Janitorial personnel

B. The following eligibility requirements in two copies, duly certified must be submitted to the Supply and Property Management Office (SPMO) at Instructional Materials Corp. Building (National Book Development Board), A. Regidor Street fronting the PAG-ASA Astronomical Observatory, U.P. Campus, Diliman, Quezon City, to form the basis for evaluation and assessment for pre-qualification of bidders:

1.) SEC/DTI/Cooperative Development Registration Papers
2.) 2004 Business License/Permit
3.) Income Tax Return for the last two (2) years (2002 & 2003) with accompanying Audited Financial Statements marked "received" by the BIR, and
4.) A. For Security Agency
    1. Type and number of firearms with license/communication equipment/vehicles the agency has.
    2. Certification of membership in good standing from the PADPAO.
  B. For Janitorial Agency
    1. Type and number of janitorial equipment/materials the agency has.
5.) List of past and present and on-going contracts (clients) including awarded contracts yet to be started, stating therein the value or total contract cost of projects and the year/period covered by the contract.
6.) SSS/NLRC (DOLE) Clearance for the last three (3) years.
7.) Duly notarized statement of the duly authorized representative of the company that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, offices or corporations.

DETAILED SPECIFICATIONS WILL BE LISTED IN THE BIDDING DOCUMENTS

The above mentioned requirements must be completely submitted in two (2) separate folders with Table of Contents and properly tabbed. Otherwise, the same will not be accepted by the SPMO.

NOTE: * ONLY ELIGIBLE BIDDERS WILL BE ISSUED THE INVITATION TO BID DOCUMENTS AND BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BIDDING.

C. Deadline for submission: 30 April 2004
D. Pre-bidding and bidding schedules shall be announced to all eligible bidders.
E. The University of the Philippines reserves the right to review the qualifications of all selected bidders, subject to technical, financial and production criteria, reject any or all bids, waive any formality or defect therein and accept the offer considered most advantageous to the University.
F. For further particulars, please inquire from Mr. Pedro E. Fajardo, Chief, SPMO, anytime during office hours at the above mentioned address or call Tel. No. 920-5374 (direct line) and 920-5301 local 4331, 4911 and 4913

(Sgd.) EMERLINDA R. ROMAN
Chancellor

(PDI - April 16 & 23, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Zamboanga del Norte
MUNICIPALITY OF PRESIDENT MANUEL A. ROXAS
Poblacion, Pres. Manuel A. Roxas, Zamboanga del Norte

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipal Government of Pres. Manuel A. Roxas thru the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) hereby invites manufacturers, suppliers and / or distributors to apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the supply of various heavy equipments and spare parts

The approved budget for this contract is P4,940,000.00

Schedule of activities	Date	Time
1. Submission of Eligibility Requirements	April 22-29, 2004	
2. Issuance of Bid Documents	April 22-29, 2004	
3. Pre-Bid Conference/Eligibility checking	April 29, 2004	2:00 p.m.
4. Opening of Bids	May 18, 2004	2:00 p.m.

The public bidding shall be held at the Upper House, Municipal Hall, Poblacion, Pres. Manuel A. Roxas, ZN.

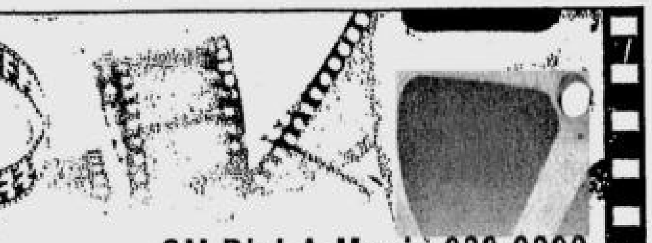
Only eligible suppliers who will be notified by fax, mail or phone shall be issued the Bid Document upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Two Thousand P2,000.00) Pesos.

For more information, please inquire from the BAC Secretariat, cellphone # 0920-812-4257.

The Municipal Government of Pres. Manuel A. Roxas reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. The government further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation

(Sgd.) NENEN T. MARTINEZ
BAC Chairman

(PDI – April 17 & 23, 2004)



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Central

SM MEGAMALL
6331901

1 50 FIRSTDATES
2 TAKING LIVES
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 PAYCHECK
5 PETER PAN
6 HELLBOY
7 ACACIA
8 TWISTED
9 BOOBITA ROSE
10 HELLBOY
11 SPARTAN
12 CHECK INN

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1 HELLBOY
2 SCOOBY DOO 2
3 TAKING LIVES
4 PAYCHECK
5 SPARTAN
6 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 HELLBOY
8 PETER PAN
9 BOOBITA ROSE
10 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
11 UNINVITED
12 CHECK INN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 SPARTAN
2 TAKING LIVES
3 TWISTED
4 HELLBOY
5 PETER PAN
6 PAYCHECK
7 CHECK INN
8 ACACIA
9 BOOBITA ROSE
10 50 FIRST DATES
11 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
12 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PETER PAN
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 ACACIA
5 SPARTAN
6 TAKING LIVES
7 HELLBOY
8 PAYCHECK

SM CITY STA. MESA
7149522 • 7161416

1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 TAKING LIVES
3 HELLBOY
4 PAYCHECK
5 SPARTAN
6 ACACIA
7 PETER PAN
8 TWISTED
9 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
10 CHECK INN

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 HELLBOY
2 SPARTAN
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 CHECK INN

North

SM CITY MARILAO
(044) 933 2013 to 17

1 HELLBOY
2 PETER PAN
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 HELL BOY
2 TAKING LIVES
3 PAYCHECK
4 KARIBAL
5 HIGHMAYMEN
6 BOOBITA ROSE

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 BONE SNATCHER
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 HELLBOY

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS
8066888

1 ACACIA
2 PETER PAN
3 HELL BOY
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 TAKING LIVES
6 SCOOBY DOO 2
7 BOOBITA ROSE
8 SPARTAN
9 PAYCHECK
10 CHECK INN

SM CITY BICUTAN
7763055

1 HELLBOY
2 BOOBITA ROSE
3 SPARTAN
4 PAYCHECK

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT
8294975

1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 SPARTAN
3 HELLBOY
4 PAYCHECK

SM CITY BACOOR
(046)4173868

1 ACACIA
2 PETER PAN
3 SPARTAN
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 HELL BOY
6 BOOBITA ROSE
7 PAYCHECK
8 CHECK INN

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7108977-80

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 HIDALGO
4 BOOBITA ROSE

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU
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1 DON'T TEMPT ME
2 TAKING LIVES
3 50 FIRST DATES
4 LOVE ACTUALLY
5 GRUDGE 2
6 SORUM
7 BOOBITA ROSE
8 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

SM CITY ILOILO
(033) 3209422

1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 RESERVED
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 50 FIRST DATES
5 HIDALGO
6 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 RESERVED
8 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

SM CITY DAVAO
(082) 2976908

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE GRUDGE 2
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 50 FIRST DATES
5 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
6 TAKING LIVES

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8592884

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 GRUDGE 2
3 50 FIRST DATES
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

—THE— PODIUM CINEMA

1
PAYCHECK
12:10 FS/12:40 MF/ 3:15/ 5:50/ 8:25/ 10:25 LFS/ 11:00 LMF/1:00 END

2
HELLBOY
12:10 FS / 12:40 MF/ 3:15/ 5:50 / 8:25 / 10:25 LFS / 11:00 LMF/ 1:05 END

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HELLBOY
11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40

2 SPARTAN 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12:40, 3:15, 3:00, 5:50, 8:25, 10:30
4 PAYCHECK 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
5 HELLBOY 11:30, 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10
6 TAKING LIVES 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
7 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:35
8 PETER PAN 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:45
9 TWISTED 11:15, 1:20, 3:25, 5:30, 7:35, 9:40
10 50 FIRST DATES 11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:35

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA
526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

1 HELLBOY 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
2 PAYCHECK 11:30, 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:05, 10:00
3 TAKING LIVES 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
4 SPARTAN 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
5 PETER PAN 10:15, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
6 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 10:10, 12:25, 2:50, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
7 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:45, 10:00

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST
682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1 SPARTAN 11:10, 1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:10
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:40, 1:20, 4:00, 6:40, 9:30
3 TAKING LIVES 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:20
4 PETER PAN 10:05, 12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:40, 9:00
5 HELLBOY 10:55, 1:25, 3:55, 6:25, 9:00
6 CHECK-IN 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00
7 PAYCHECK 10:25, 1:05, 2:45, 6:25, 9:05
8 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW
935-3229 / 31

1 HELLBOY 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30
2 SPARTAN 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30
4 TAKING LIVES 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:10
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12:20, 3:00, 5:40, 8:30
6 PAYCHECK 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
7 PETER PAN 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30
8 THE UNINVITED 11:00, 1:20, 3:40, 6:00, 8:30

Citisquare MALABON
288-0985/2575

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 HELLBOY
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
4 CHECK-IN

big Supercenter CAINTA
240-4661

1 HELLBOY
2 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
3 CHECK-IN
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA
Laguna (049)837-0907

1 HELLBOY
2 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
3 HIGHWAYMEN
4 KARIBAL
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Big R Supercenter LIPA
757-3664 / 312-5870

1 PAYCHECK
2 PETER PAN
3 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5 ACACIA

Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS
852-2125

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 HELLBOY
3 HELLBOY
4 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
5 PAYCHECK

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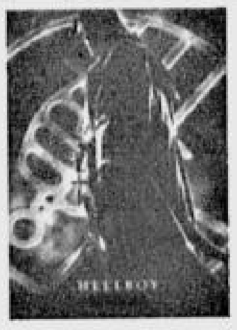

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3	**HELLBOY**	11:20, 2:00, 4:40 7:20, 10:00 PG-13
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PAYCHECK **PG13** 12:30, 2:55, 5:20, 7:45, 10:10	**PETER PAN** **GP** 12:10, 2:35, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50	**HELLBOY** **PG13** 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

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3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 (SDDS) HELLBOY
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2 PAYCHECK
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4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

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5 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

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4 50 FIRST DATES

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MAY 5	PBA : ALASKA VS. STA. LUCIA
MAY 6	NCA7-COCK DERBY

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EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY : LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	CHECK -INN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

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A	CHECK -IN
B	CLOSED
C	

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CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-2	CHECK INN
CINEMA-3	TWISTED
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-6	NIGHTMARE
CINEMA-7	ACACIA
CINEMA-8	VENUS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPARTAN
CINEMA-12	PETER PAN
CINEMA-14	PAYCHECK
CINEMA-15	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	HIGHWAYMEN
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	PETER PAN
CINEMA-4	[illegible]

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CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
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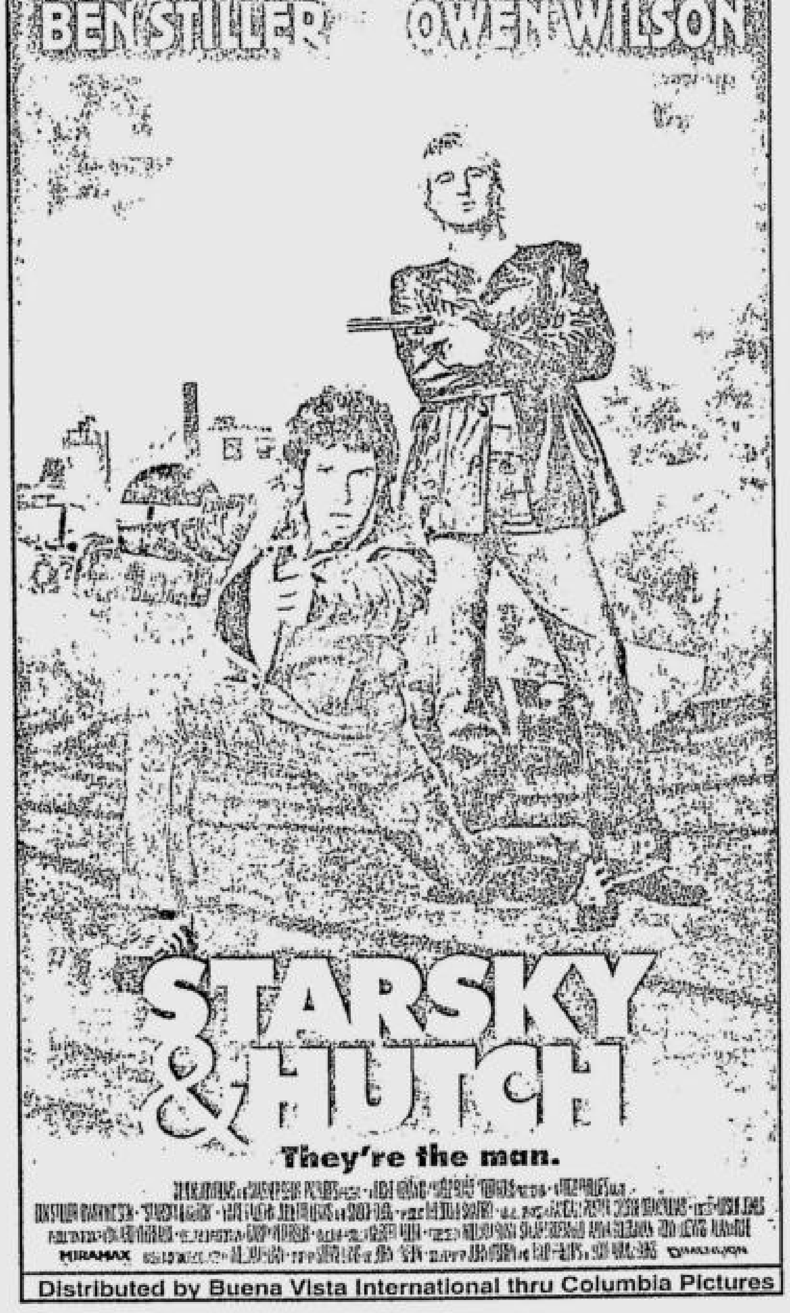

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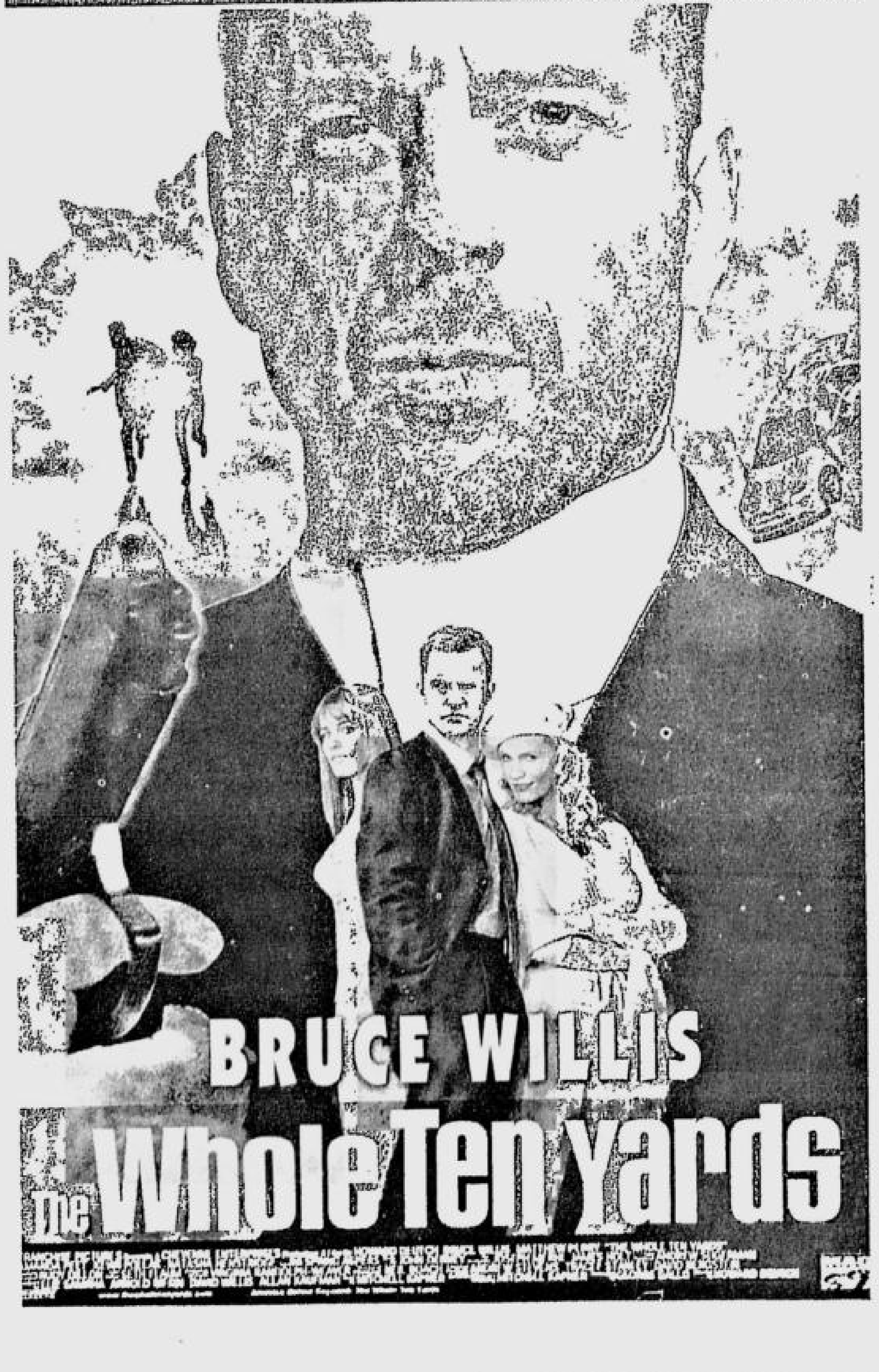

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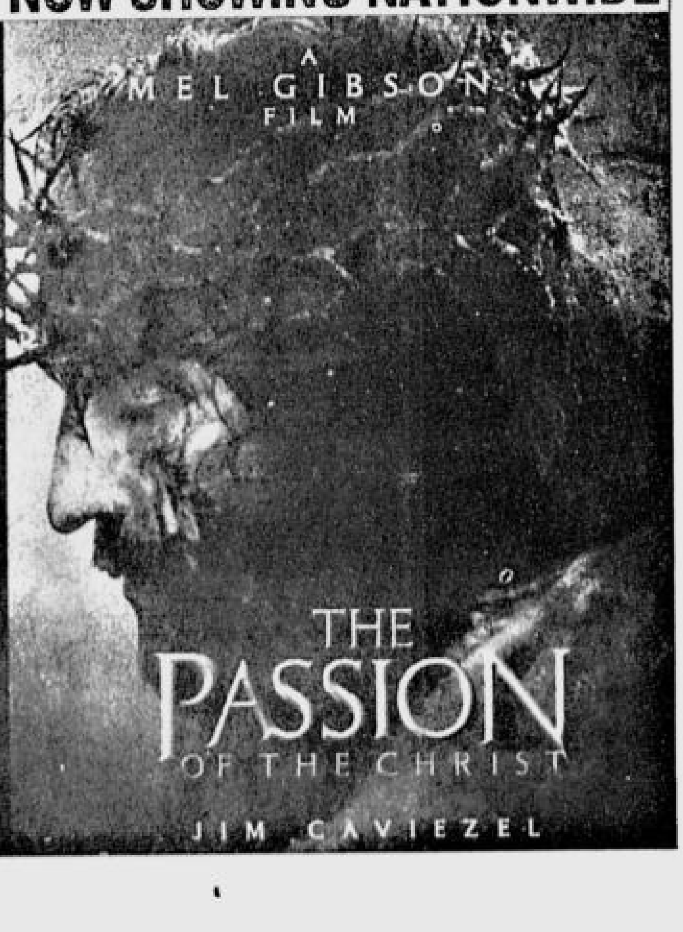


BUSINESS

BIR backs proposal to slap taxes on OFWs

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has backed a proposal to collect taxes from Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), a potentially lucrative source of income-tax revenue as their number has grown over the years.

The BIR, which is hard-pressed to improve tax collection, said income-tax collection from Filipinos working abroad has dropped due to a tax exemption granted seven years ago.

OFWs used to pay a one- to 2-percent income tax until the Tax Code was revised in 1997.

BIR Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said the tax exemption of OFWs contributed to the drop in the revenue agency's collection of income tax from individual taxpayers.

She said the fact that the number of OFWs has increased over the years doubly hurt the BIR's revenue collection efforts.

"Before, the number of OFWs was insignificant. But now, their number has grown and they have already become a major industry. Taxing them would be a big help," said Henares.

The idea to re-impose taxes on OFWs was proposed by the government's National Tax Research Center (NTRC).

The research agency earlier said that highly paid Filipino workers abroad, such as engineers and ship captains, should give their share to the Philippine government.

It said, however, that lower income earners like domestic helpers could have their tax exemption retained.

NTRC Deputy Director Dante V. Sy was quoted earlier as saying that exempting all OFWs from income tax was unjust because some OFWs can afford to pay taxes and help the government in its revenue generation efforts.

Hans Sy takes over SM Prime

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HANS Sy has replaced his father, Henry Sy Sr., as president of SM Prime Holdings Inc., the holding company of the highly profitable SM retail group.

The elder Sy, who founded the country's biggest mall chain, will remain as chairman of the company and has expressed his intention to focus more on policy-making.

Hans Sy is the 4th of Sy's 10 children and was senior vice president for operations before he was named president yesterday after SM Prime's stockholders meeting.

The incoming president said the group remained "quite bullish" on the prospects of the property market in Southeast Asia and China.

"It's a very new market over there. Anything can (happen). We really need time to study (the international property market). It's a very different market in Southeast Asia," Sy said.

He also said that SM Prime was still studying the possibility of folding in the privately owned supermalls that operate in Xiamen, China into the listed company.

The Sy group has a majority stake in the joint venture company that runs two SM City malls in Xiamen.

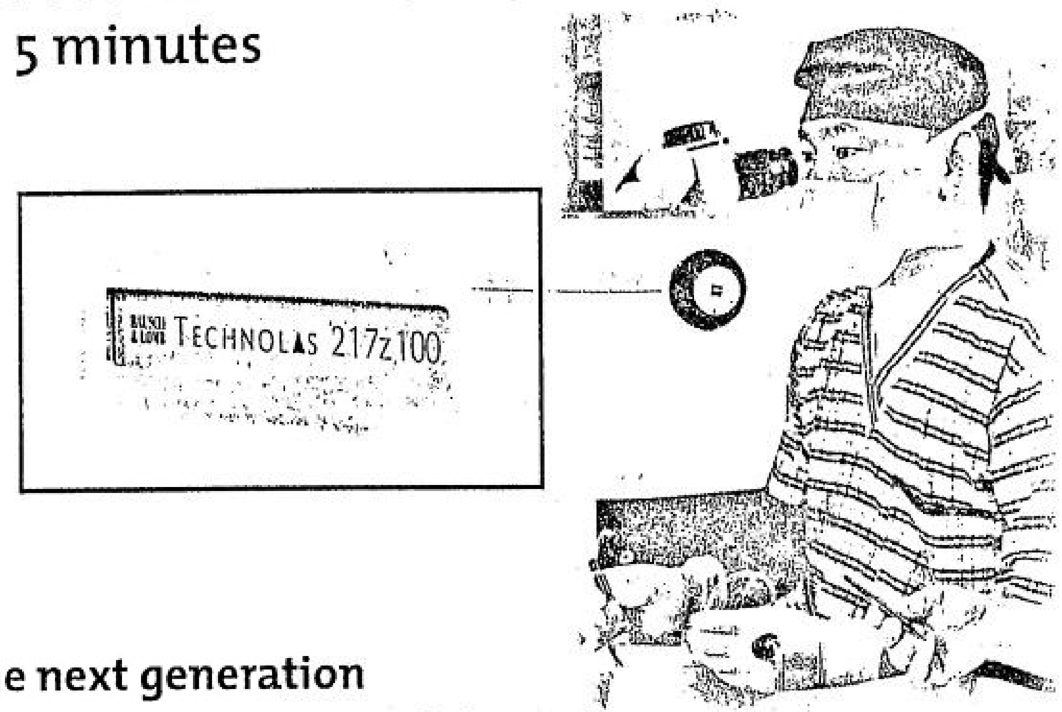
Sy is expected to steer the company's aggressive expansion plans this year.

SM Prime told stockholders yesterday said that it plans to spend P5 billion this year, largely on the opening of new malls in Dasmariñas, Cavite next month and in Batangas City by the last quarter of the year.

The company is also set to open its 300,000-square-meter Mall of Asia by next year, which officials said was 15 percent complete.

The Mall of Asia is touted to be the group's biggest project located on a reclaimed area at Roxas Boulevard.

SM Prime is also set to open the 174,000-square-meter SM City in San Lazaro Manila, a 50,000-square-meter SM City in Molino, Cavite and SM City in Valenzuela.



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Catching the spa fever /C2

The incredible Jelly Kelly

THE SEASON'S "It" bag

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

NOT a day goes that you don't see anyone with a Jelly Kelly bag in the office, mall, resto, anywhere. The women's addiction to the Jelly Kelly has been around for quite some time and, it seems, is not going away any time soon.

The Jelly Kelly fever crosses boundaries—from Europe to the US to Asia. The Financial Times and Asian Wall Street Journal have reported on this craze. The bag is so ubiquitous that it's like the "new black" (the universal color) or the "new Levis" (when the brand was a universal garment; unfortunately, not anymore).

It's been called the "poor girl's Hermes," referring to the luxury brand whose Kelly and Birkin bags have spawned wait lists of buyers, even if they cost an arm and a leg. It's beyond the reach of the working class like us, but still it's interesting to know how luxuries and trends work, especially if they're around you.

Jelly Kelly is a line of bags characterized by their soft opaque rubber, their eye-candy yummy colors, the bag lock with the Jelly Kelly logo on it and also a hang tag. The line has so many kinds but the ones that really sold like hotcakes are the design-take-offs from the Birkin. (Call them knock-offs.)

Beauty editor **Mel Cuevas** wrote the background in April Metro: "Though Hermes first came out with the Birkin bag in Amazonian rubber a few years ago, credit goes to designer and businessman **Steve Stolman**. The purveyor of resort clothes in the US, Stolman imported the rubber bags while on vacation in Milan, named the bags Jelly Kelly, and brought them to high-end stores in New York. Although Stolman insisted that his new bags were not intended as literal replicas of the real thing but as 'an amusement,' the 166-year-old leather house was certainly not amused. Hermes filed a lawsuit in the US late last year for unspecified damages. Stolman has since stopped selling the bags."

But how do you stop the rage? By then the bags were selling like hotcakes on the Internet alone. This year, in Metro Manila, the Jelly Kelly—from the genuine to the knock-offs (okay, knock-offs of knock-offs)—is sold everywhere, from the high-end boutiques to malls and *tiangge*, in a wide price range.

That's what's curious about this fad. It cuts across market—from rich to middle-class, from 6 to 60, from celeb to corporate stiffs. I saw **Kris Aquino** at ABS-CBN 9501, with her Jelly Kelly with animal print. Globe's **Anna Singson** knew exactly where to get hers for a good price. **Cedie Vargas** has a roomy white one. **Romina Urra** has a purple version.

Indeed this year, I'd say, the Jelly Kelly is the class equalizer. It's a common denominator of women from varied demographics.

And yet, even if it's that ubiquitous, it has kept its hip factor. It's not that *baduy* yet.

Why? Can't tell for sure. It should make an interesting market study but the obvious thing is, its color and texture (rubber good enough to chew) are so appealing, its design is practical. Its color makes it irresistible—hot pink, aqua, purple, white, gray, opal black.

Yes, there are black Jelly Kellys.

The Jelly Kelly also has varied lines, although they're not sold in Metro Manila yet. There are Jelly Kelly backpacks, doctor bags, saddle bags, messenger bags, pouch bags, even diaper bags, coin purses and checkbook covers. Just check them out online.

I must admit, however, that I don't have one and don't intend to have one. Some women mark their years with, uh, the guys they've been with. I look at my stuff and realize that I can mark my years on earth with the mountains of fashion accessories I've accumulated from bags to trinkets. So one more Jelly Kelly this lifetime. Not.

I asked a girlfriend, who has resisted the urge to get a Jelly Kelly, why she's not getting herself the most popular fashion accessory in town. "It's not the most popular fashion accessory," she told me. Then what is, I asked. "Men are," she said. (Why didn't I think of that?)

Bald Leo

At the Nokia Metro fashion show to mark the launch of Nokia 7200, we ran into **Leo Valdez**. The most popular Engineer of "Miss Saigon" is in town to take a long vacation from his stint in the long-running musical in the UK. But guess what? Leo's shaved his pate. Now he looks like the part. He's never looked as bold and hip as now.

At another lunch we met **Tunting Cruz**, formerly one of Manila's best dressed who now has a flourishing law practice in New York. Tunting is here until the elections to help in her brother's campaign. But what's interesting is that she's kept her **Audrey Hepburn**-inspired clothes designed by **Auggie Cordero** for her in the '80s, which we definitely can use in the Auggie Cordero Retrospective Exhibit this year.

LEO Valdez, Robbie Carmona and Patrick Rosas

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Spa fever

Prepare for the party by pampering yourself in the spa and trying weight-reducing treatments

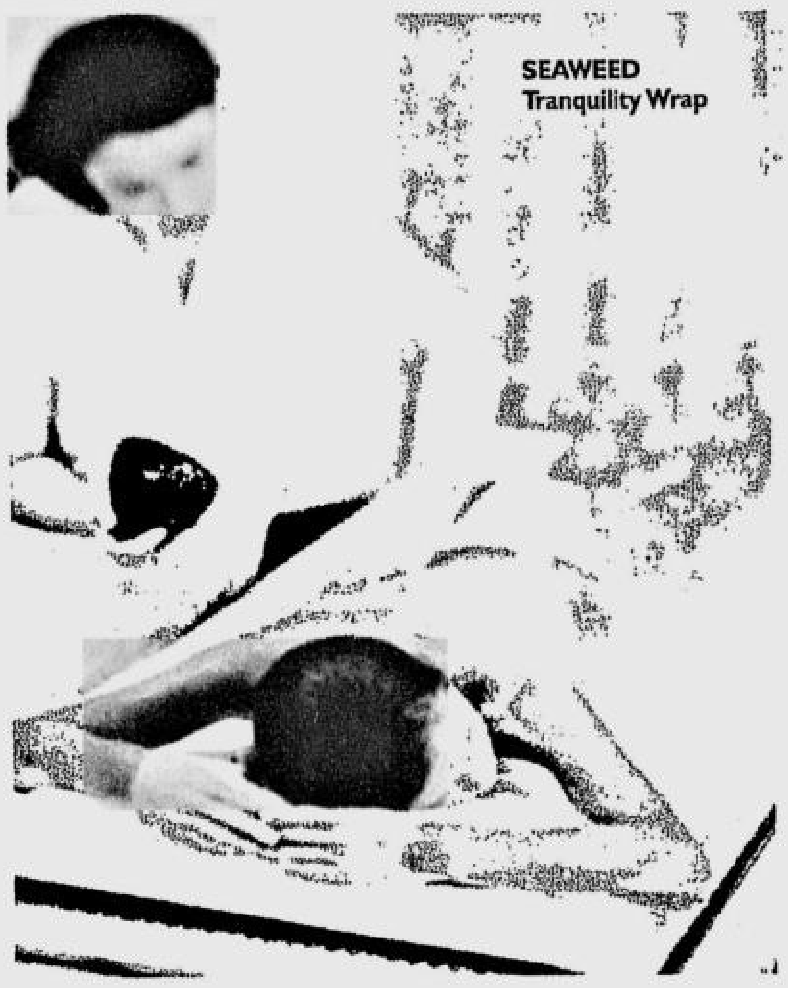
MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

DOING the spa rounds has been my latest addiction. It all started when I prepared for a big formal party where I wanted great skin and a slimmer, more toned body from head to toe (my body had started to bloat and break out from the summer heat). I have road-tested the following treatments and, trust me, this is only the beginning.

First concern: I Had to make sure the form-fitting dress would fit perfectly for that special day, so I tried these treatments four days before the big day to make sure I could keep the bloating blues at bay.

1. **Neo Spa at The Fort** for detoxification and body contour with a Seaweed Tranquility Wrap recommended 6 to 12 times total and done once or twice a week. The treatment starts with exfoliation, then a warm thermal wrap that feels relaxing but sure makes you sweat. This draws out impurities and provides trace elements for the body. Also relieves arthritis and muscle sores and improves circulation. It lasts 90 minutes and costs P2,280.



SEAWEED Tranquility Wrap

It is best when followed with a Lymphatic drainage massage which, according to PR officer Patricia Barcelon, stimulates the lymphatic system, aiding in the removal of toxins and restoring the body to health by making the immune system more efficient. It would have taken another P880 and 60 minutes. I did not have time to spare so I skipped this step, but the glow of my skin and the way my clothes fit better after the session left me satisfied.

Venue: The place looks very new and Zen, the massage rooms are very spacious and the clean, relaxing smell of lemon grass will meet you at the door, setting the perfect mood.

2. **Ionithermie.** Recommended to me by Ruffa Gutierrez Bektas as the fastest way to get rid of water retention after her pregnancy and during PMS. She credited losing 15 unwanted pounds three months after childbirth to the combination of Endermologie (for cellulite and body toning) and Ionithermie (cellulite, water retention, body contour and skin firming), which she went for every day for a full month.

Ionithermie is offered only at Belo Medical Center. At the Makati branch, they gave me a thorough body salt scrub first to exfoliate my skin, made me lie on a hot mat, wrapped me in a seaweed mask, then connected me to a body mat with electrical currents.

The mat was like a strong vibrating electrical blanket, and it felt funny and energizing as there was no way I could sleep through it. It finished with me lying in a pool of sweat and I measured an inch and a half less around the waist and hips with my skirt riding a lot lower afterward. Cost: P5,000 per session plus P2,000 for body scrub with bleach. I did not go for Endermologie as it would cost an extra P2,500 plus a one-time payment of P1,900 for a body stocking.

On the formal day itself, people could not stop touching the skin on my arms and commenting at how flat my stomach was.

Second concern: Face blemishes. I discovered this place called Blue Mountains and decided to try their Tea Tree facial for oily skin. An hour-and-a-half facial with extractions and mask cost P790 plus and extra P300 for every excess up to 30 minutes.

Marissa, my aesthetician, was very thorough at removing all my blemishes. She steamed my face so the extractions were not at all painful; they readily popped out. I had a lot of blemishes but did not exceed the one-and-a-half hours and my skin was perfectly smooth and mark-free two days after. Owner Hank Vos said it was the tea tree that made me heal fast. They closed my pores with an electrotherapy wand that made zapping sounds on my skin without me feeling pain.

I was so inspired that I requested for the Tea Tree starter kit from The Body Shop with a cleanser, refresher and mattifying gel. Threw in the concealer to cover and treat future breakouts as well. These days I use the mask twice a week to control oil and draw out impurities. It's nondrying and perfect for more mature acne-prone skin like mine. My skin maintenance plan is working so far!

Call Neo Spa at 8158233, Belo Med at 8177178 and Blue Mountains at 8133631

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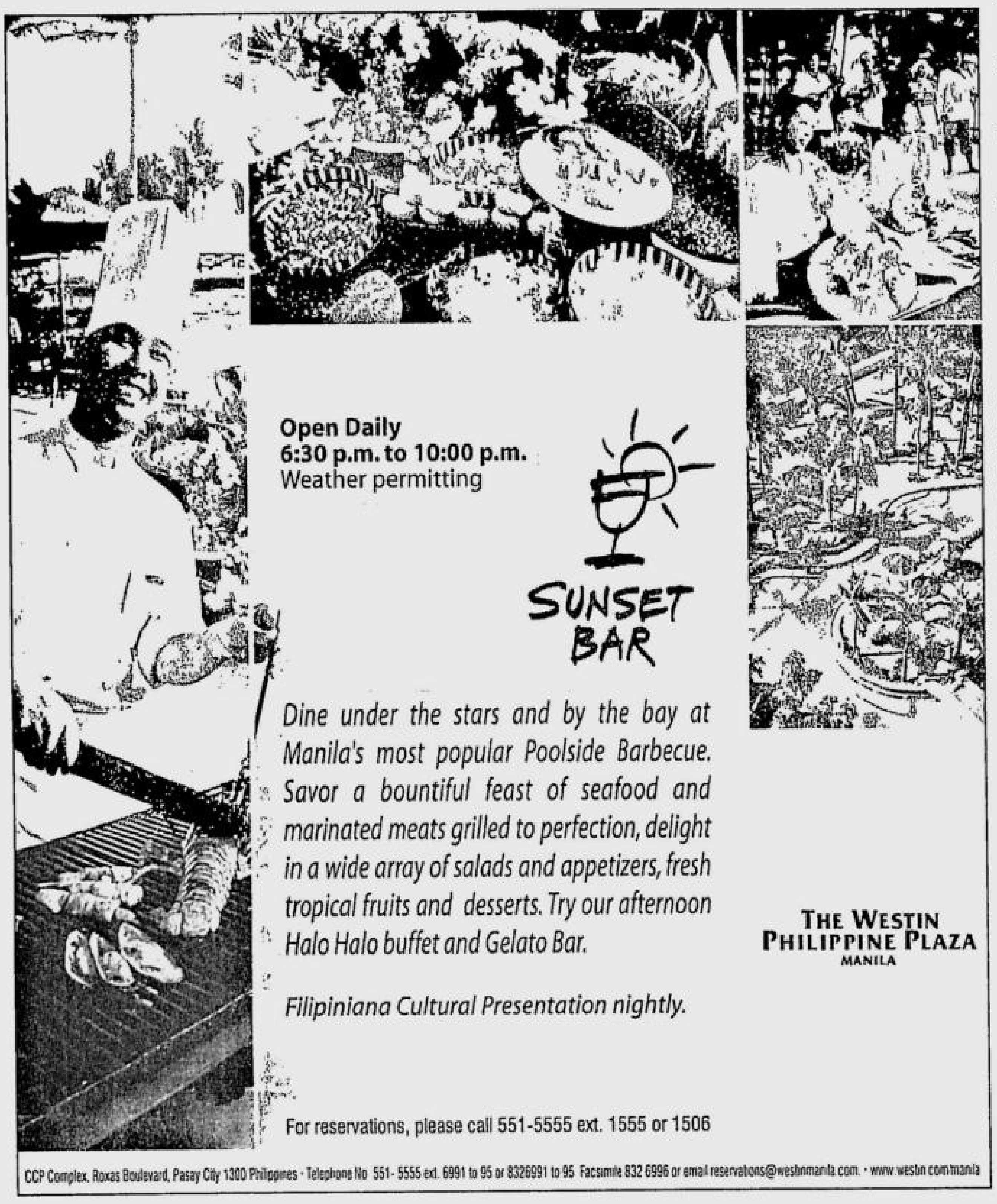

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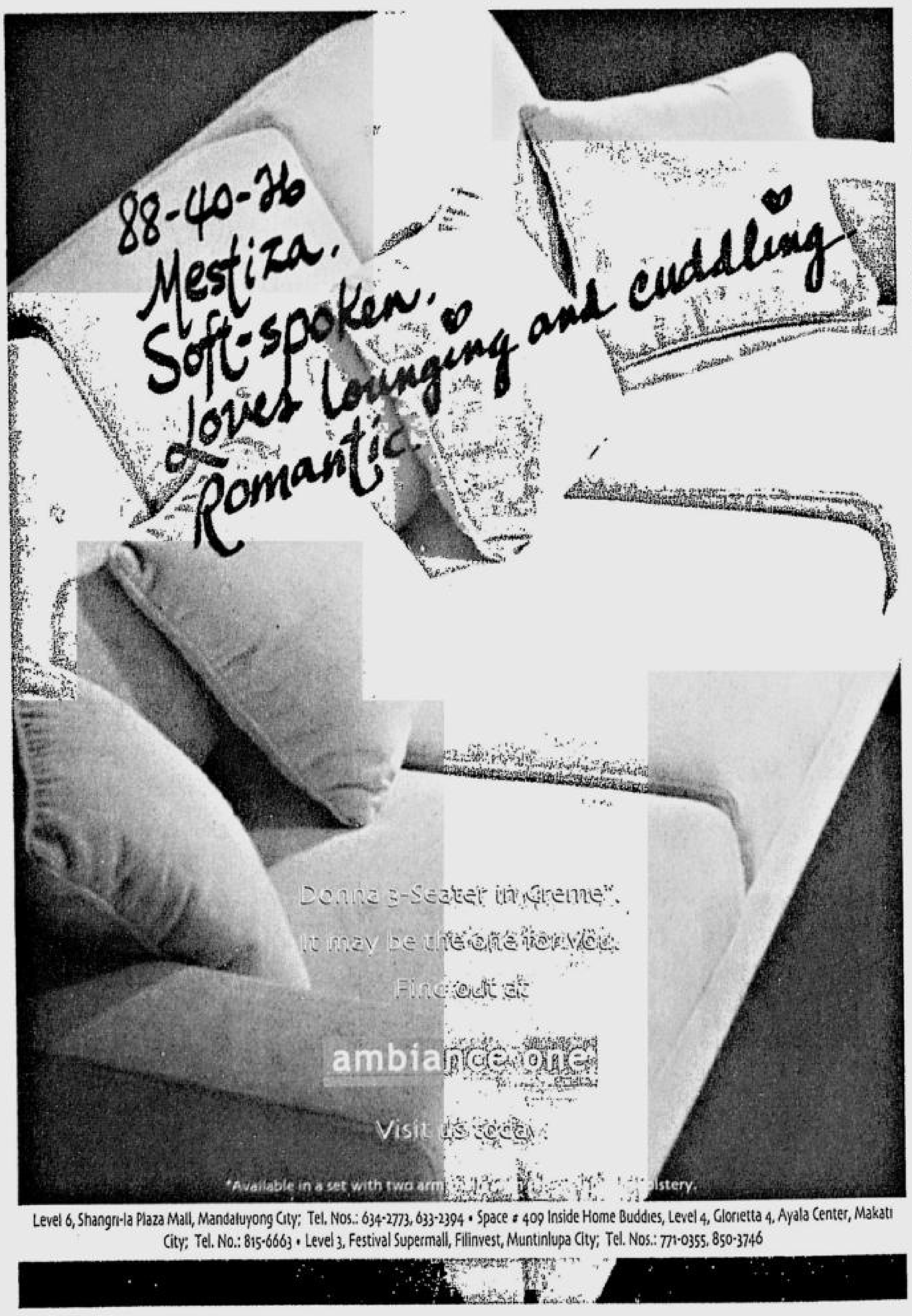

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Book and workshop on hair trends

ACCLAIMED hairdressing expert Antony Whitaker lives by one philosophy in his work: "Beauty always comes first before fashion." And this is the same principle that has inspired and given focus to the works of many hairdressers worldwide.

ANTHONY Whitaker, Schwarzkopf Professional's global ambassador

As Schwarzkopf Professional's global ambassador, Whitaker headlines the company's hairdressing shows and business and motivational seminars worldwide.

Filipino hairdressers can get the same inspiration and expertise when Whitaker visits the Philippines for the highly anticipated Schwarzkopf Professional's Essential Looks Spring/Summer 2004 presentation to be held on April 27 at the RCBC Plaza in Makati City. Makeup of models will be by Fix Salon.

"Essential Looks" is Schwarzkopf Professional's hair fashion trend book which is considered a gem in the global hairdressing industry. The book is an authoritative guide and an important source of hair forecasts and directions, providing both creative inspiration and practical know-how.

For the Spring/Summer 2004 edition, "Essential Looks" celebrates a return to glamour, not the high maintenance, traditional concept but glamour that is wearable—hair with attitude that combines sexiness with street chic.

"Essential Looks" achieved this by taking six key trends and reinterpreting them into commercial styles for salons worldwide. There's the edgy Fly Girl, the wavy Surf and the cowboy-style Rhinestone. There's also the Flapper Girl, for those who want roaring glam, and the Casuals, consisting of two looks of toned-down glam, the classic and urban chic.

Schwarzkopf Professional products, including the "Essential Looks" book, are distributed in the Philippines by Top Style Marketing Inc., with offices at 25PA Eisenhower Condominium, Eisenhower St., Greenhills, San Juan. Call 7231763, 7268508, 7268507 and 7228474.

Hair tilt winner off to Shanghai

THIS year's overall champion of the Hairdressers and Cosmetologists Associations of the Phils. (Hacap) hair and makeup contest will get a chance to represent Pantene Phils. in the Pantene Asia-Pacific hair competition to be held in Shanghai this October.

Hacap's 23rd National Hairstyling and Makeup competition is scheduled on April 27 at the Philippine Trade and Training Center on Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

Various participants from the different Hacap chapters are expected to join the tilt, which challenges competitive Filipino hair and makeup professionals to demonstrate their outstanding talents in the men's and ladies' coloring, haircutting, makeup and hairstyling categories.

Models donning elegant clothes with hairstyles and makeup will also be presented during the day-long affair.

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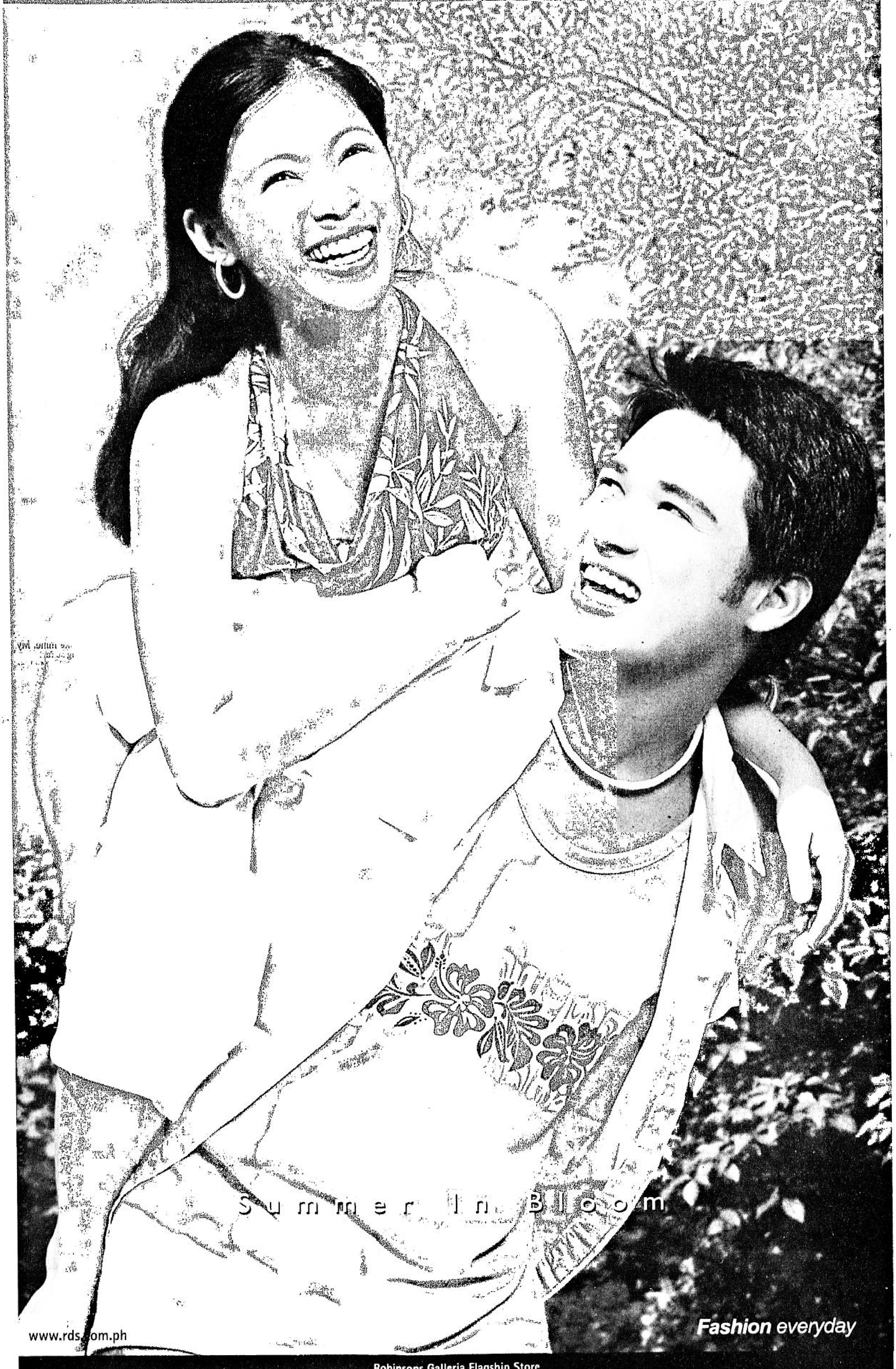
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Imedeen, a pioneer in "systemic skincare" (skincare from within), now introduces Imedeen Time Perfection™ — a skincare in tablet form with an advanced dual-action formula containing two key ingredients: the patented LycoPhence GS ™ and the exclusive Biomarine Complex ™.

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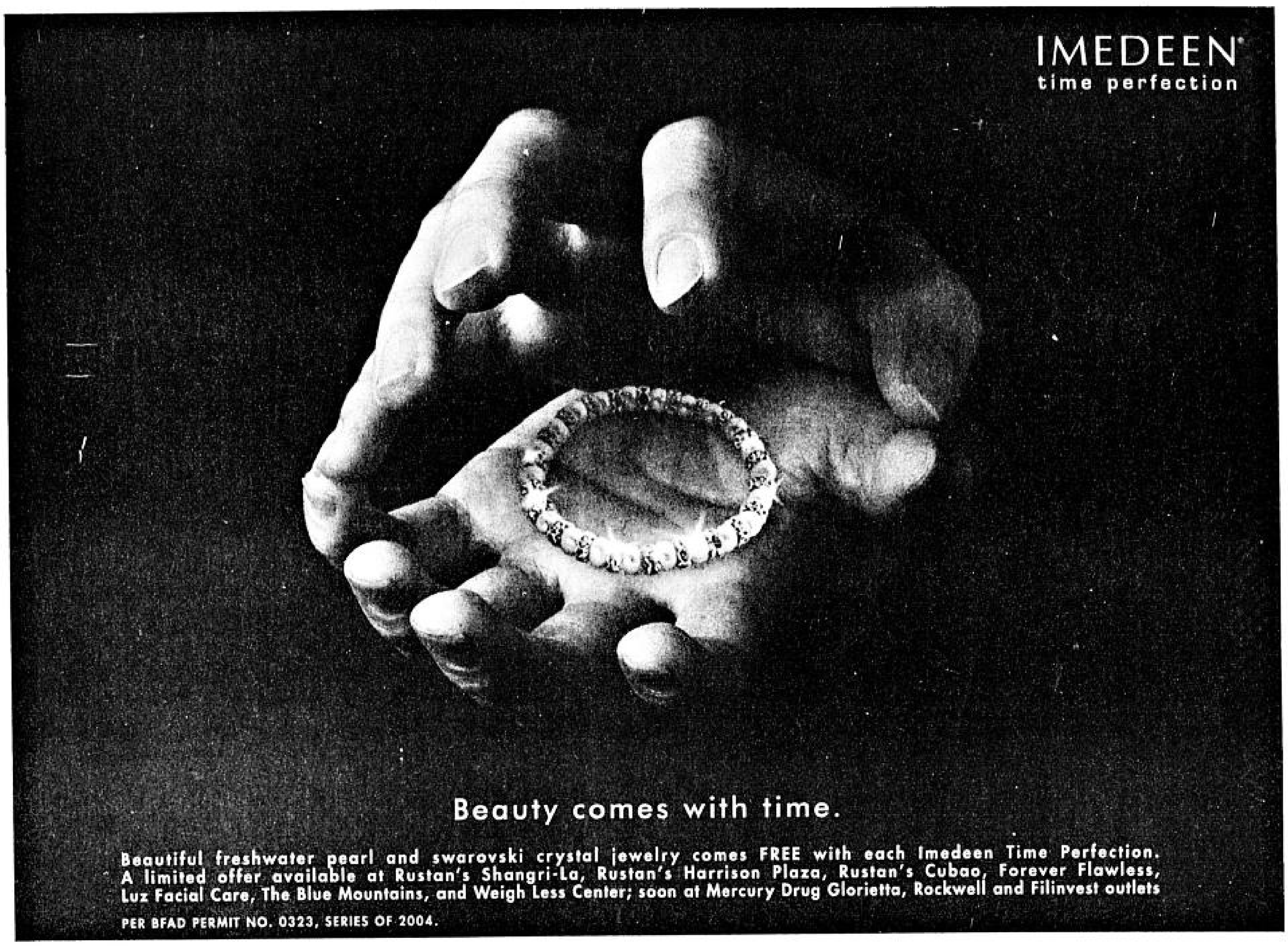
But when skin structure is already weak or is showing deterioration, another ingredient is needed to help revitalize or rebuild that condition — the Biomarine Complex. Also found in Imedeen Classic, the Biomarine Complex in Imedeen Time Perfection may help nourish and strengthen the inner layers of the skin where ageing begins. With a better ability to hold essential moisture, skin feels softer, looks more radiant, and has an overall improved quality and texture.

Imedeen Time Perfection was recently launched in the Philippines and is available at selected department stores and beauty centers. For more information, check out www.imedeen.com.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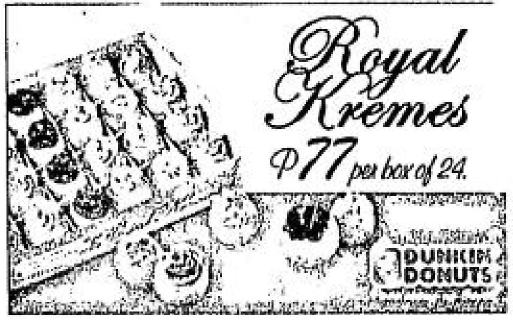
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Mother Nature weaves her magic

BELINDA Inao decided Mother Nature knew better so she left her garden pretty much the way she found it.

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

THE HILLS are alive with an explosion of colors in Siquijor. Or at least one particular hill is.

In a province where most houses are built a few meters—if not steps—from the sea, Belinda B. Inao's house in Barangay Camogao, Enrique Villanueva (formerly Talinting) town, is a delightful exception. Perched atop the highest point of the more than one hectare property that stretches down to the shore, the house is a head-turner particularly at this time of year with the riot of colors in its sloping garden. Fuchsias, soft pinks, sunshiny yellow, bold reds and brilliant whites combine for one of the most colorful sights in the island province reputed to be home to sorcerers and black magic practitioners.

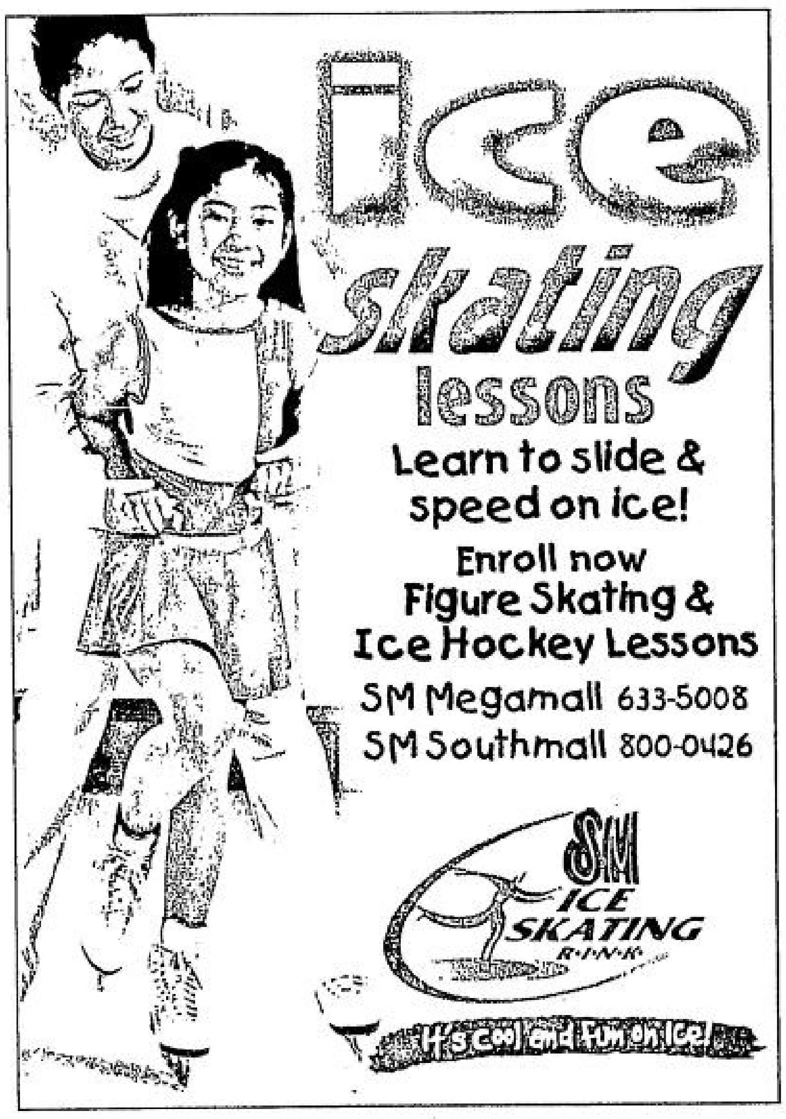
Inao's garden does not boast of exotic and expensive plants nor did she get any help from an expert landscaper, much less a sorcerer. Mother Nature started all the work and Inao simply helped her along.

The provincial agricultural technician and mother of five, who is married to a seaman, said when they acquired the property some four years ago, fuchsia and white vincas—known as *chichirica* in some parts of the country—were already growing profusely, almost like weeds.

Bucking the trend

Inao and family could have gone along

MOTHER/D2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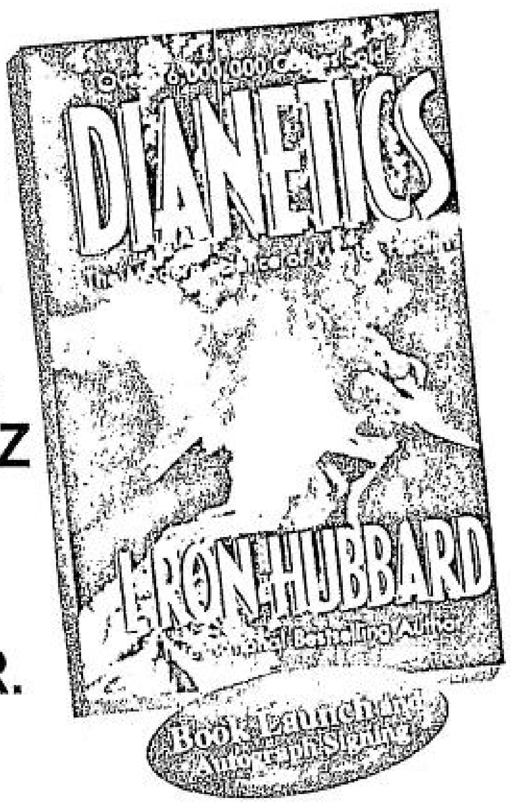

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THE HARDY bromeliad became a favorite collectible among Siquijor garden lovers.

Mother Nature weaves her magic

One lucky Siquijor homeowner did not need sorcery for her enchanting garden

From page D1

with the latest garden trends and replaced the resident plants with current favorites. Siquijor, which the Department of Tourism hopes to make a major eco-tourism destination, has kept abreast of what is "in" among Filipino gardeners—bromeliads and euphorbias becoming all the rage one time or another. And now sansevierias, also known as mother-in-law's tongue and reputed to be pollution busters, are everywhere on the island.

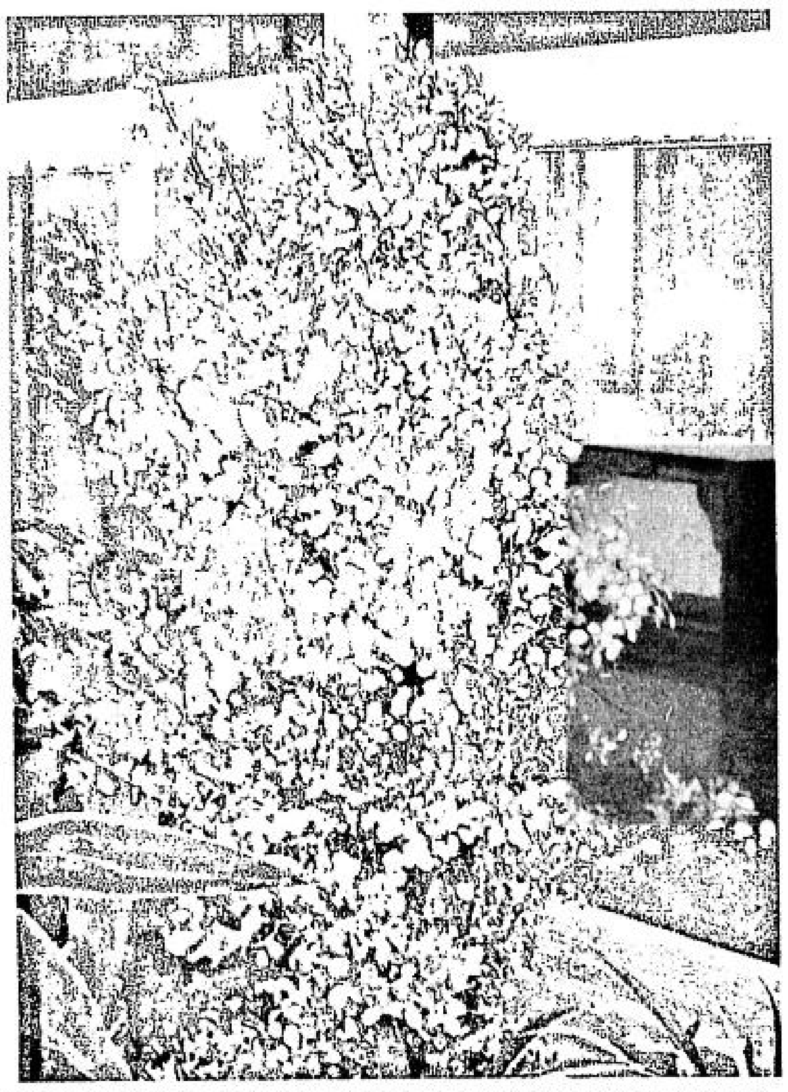
But Inao decided she did not need to follow any trends to make a distinctive garden. Instead, she decided, when they moved into their new home three years ago, to help Mother Nature along by moving some of the prolific vincas just to put some kind of order into her ready-made garden.

The chichiricas now line the footpath from her house to about two-thirds of the way to the road and are spreading every which way still and may soon blanket an even wider space.

Thoughtful additions of bougainvillea shrubs, *gumamela*, and a few other indigenous plants that complemented or contrasted dramatically with the vincas' brilliant hues resulted in one of the most impressive sights in Siquijor.

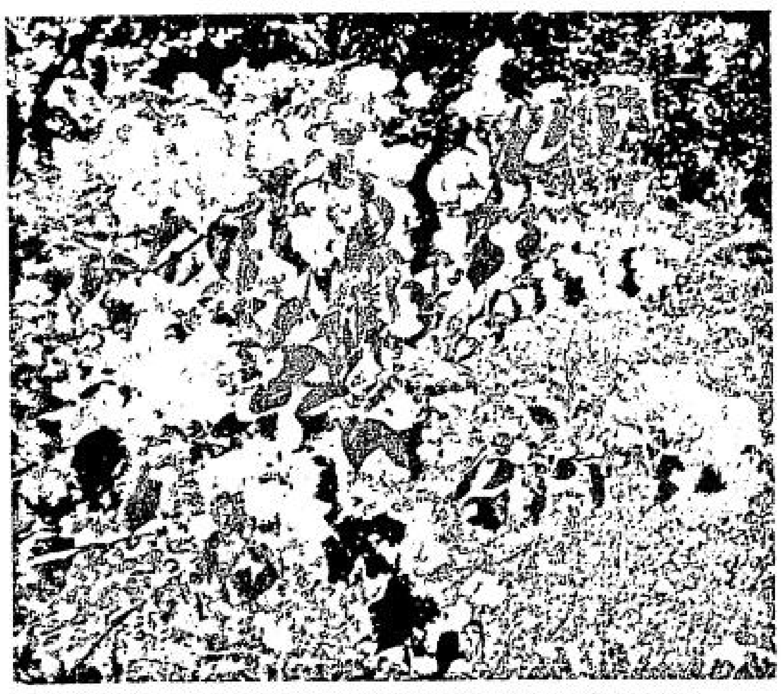
Inao has planted the rest of the property, particularly the portion leading to the beach with fruit trees like *langka*, papaya, coconut, *siniguelas* (the island is a major source of this popular, highly seasonal and always in short supply fruit) and mango.

With its vantage point atop a hill, Inao's house also offers a breathtaking view of the sparkling clear blue sea but, given the spread of vibrant colors in front of her, it takes a while for a visitor to appreciate what lies below.

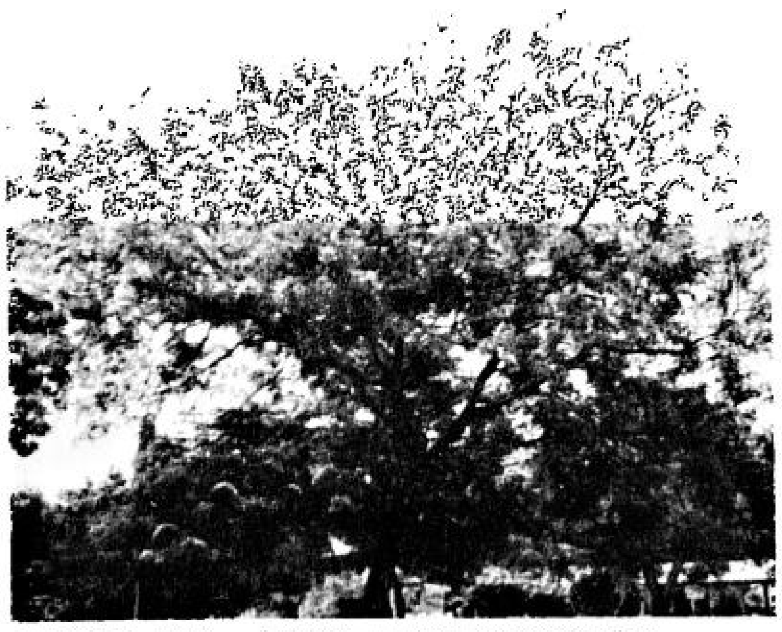


THIS unidentified brightly colored plant in different shades of pink is the only rare and exotic species the Inaos have.

THE "SHRIMP" plant, reportedly an import from Mexico, is considered indigenous by the Siquijornons.



INAO planted *gumamelas* and bougainvillea to complement or contrast dramatically with the vincas.



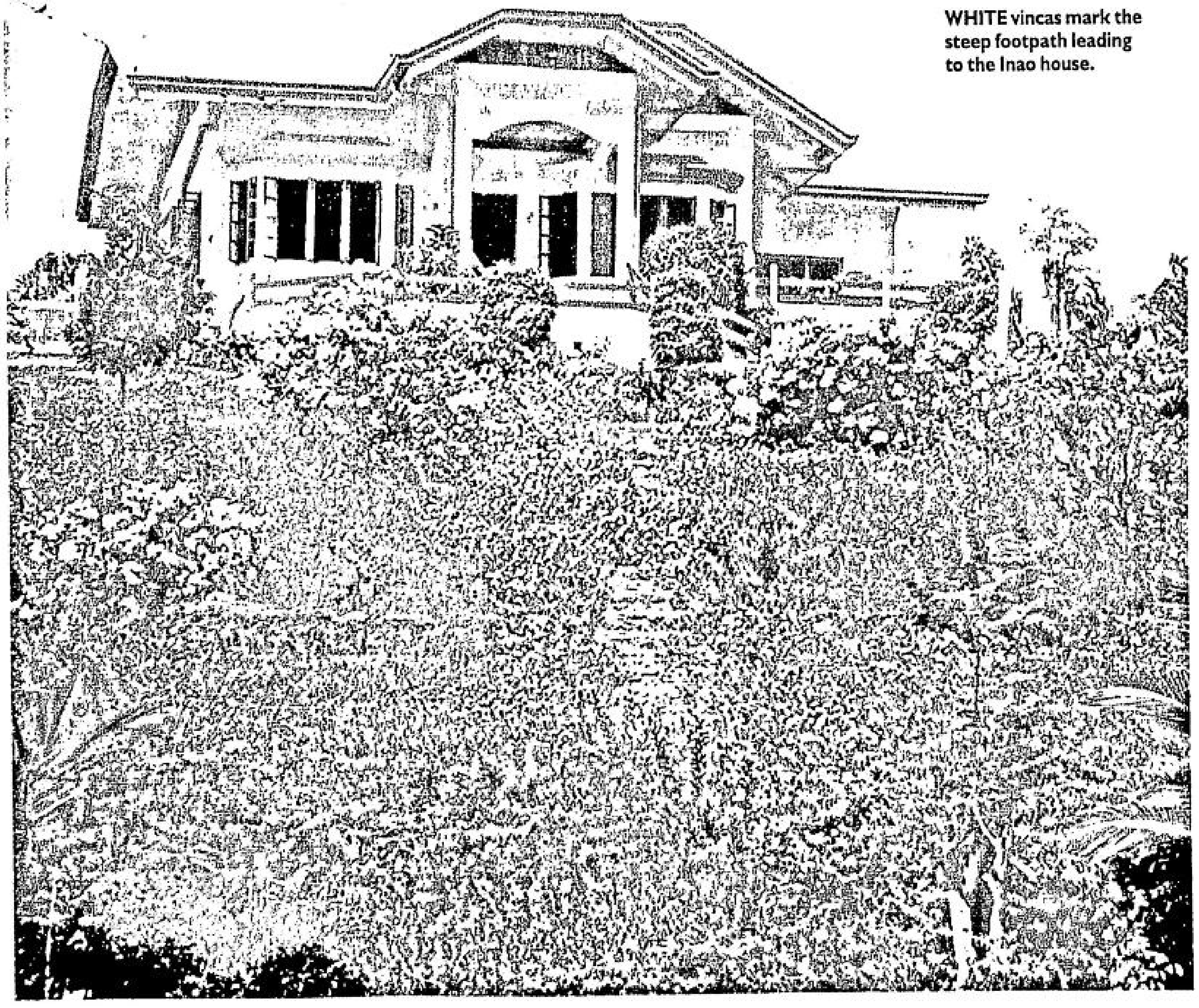
CASSIA, like this tree in full bloom, thrives well in Siquijor.

SINEGUELAS tree already filled with small young green fruits

HYDRANGEAS brighten up a modest garden in another part of Siquijor.

IN OTHER parts of the Philippines, the pollution-buster sansevierias are currently popular in Siquijor.

THE VIEW from the top looking down—of clear, calm brilliantly blue sea—is just as exhilarating as the view from below looking up.



WHITE vincas mark the steep footpath leading to the Inao house.

Corporation as environmental steward

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

Conclusion

AFTER TAKING us on a tour of their coal-fired power plant (described last week), Mirant officials showed us some of their efforts at keeping their environmental commitment to help surrounding communities revitalize their natural resources.

One of Mirant's environmental projects is mangrove replantation. The initiative was once referred to as a mangrove eco-destination but is now called the Carbon Sink Project.

Environmental manager Rene Morente explains that carbon sinks are set up in power plants to balance emissions such as carbon dioxide produced when burning coal. Such emissions can be toxic and dangerous, and so there is a need for countermeasures to make power generation as safe as possible.

One of Mirant's countermeasures is the rehabilitation and reforestation of degraded mangrove forests in the area. The work is being done in several coastal and upland areas in Pagbilao, Quezon, site of Mirant's power plant. Mangroves like *bakawan*, as well as seagrass, are now not only growing healthily, but also opening up other livelihood opportunities for the communities. There is, for instance, a marine cage culture for grouper fish, as well as other aquaculture projects.

Generating jobs

Mangrove nurseries have been put up to assure a constant supply of seedlings called "propagules."

All these activities require human power provided by people living in the sites themselves, who get a steady source of livelihood. To further assure the success of the carbon sink project, teams composed of barangay participants, town officials as well as representatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources monitor wind and water.

To see how the mangroves are doing, we visit one area nearest the plant, which means a hike through a 780-meter boardwalk. It is a pleasant, invigorating walk, especially for the city-bound among the group in need of perking up sagging spirits and leg muscles.

The walk ends at an open area where a watch tower rises. This is one of several constructed by the power plant to oversee the surrounding terrain and to detect fire in the vicinity. This end of the eco-destination features a wharf for boat riders (this is an island, remember).

The return to the plant requires another 780-meter walk, a more leisurely one this time. We note little holes on the ground that indicate, says Rene Morente, the presence of those types of crabs that fetch good prices in the market.

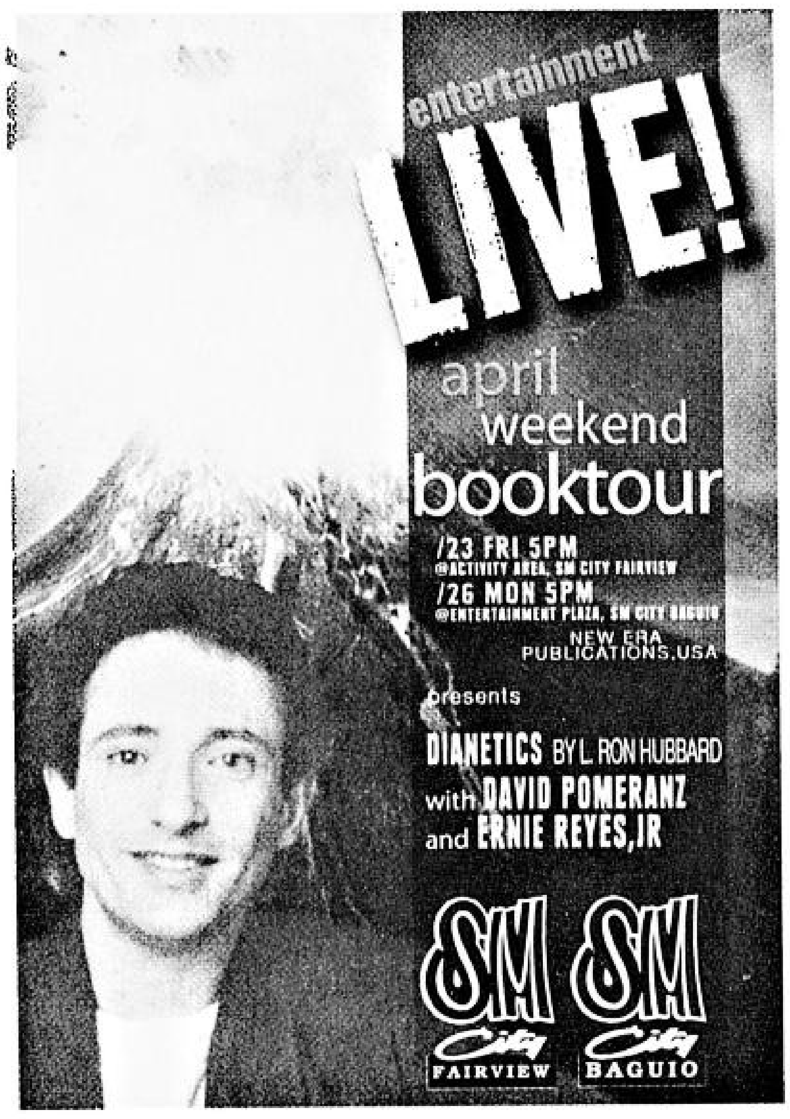
Reasons not to leave home

This short trip to a mangrove reforestation area brings out certain facts that our government leaders should know, foremost of which is that, given the opportunities and incentives that projects like these provide, more Filipinos would keep to their home grounds rather than go to urban centers to eke out a living, often in squatter areas, adding to the social problems in the city. When people know that right in their rural homes they are needed to develop and enhance what is already there, there is bound to be less urban shifts and overcrowding.

It is Mirant's dream, and we pray it comes true soon, that a standard be set for companies and businesses that would measure not only their financial performance but also what they're giving back to country and nature. This explains why this company submits three reports annually—financial, social commitment, and environmental stewardship.

Mirant also nurtures a vision where top corporations would come together to assist the government identify areas where they can help as one body. It is an idealistic and altruistic vision, but it is good to know that someone somewhere is going the extra mile.

E-mail the author at dorisnuyda@yahoo.com



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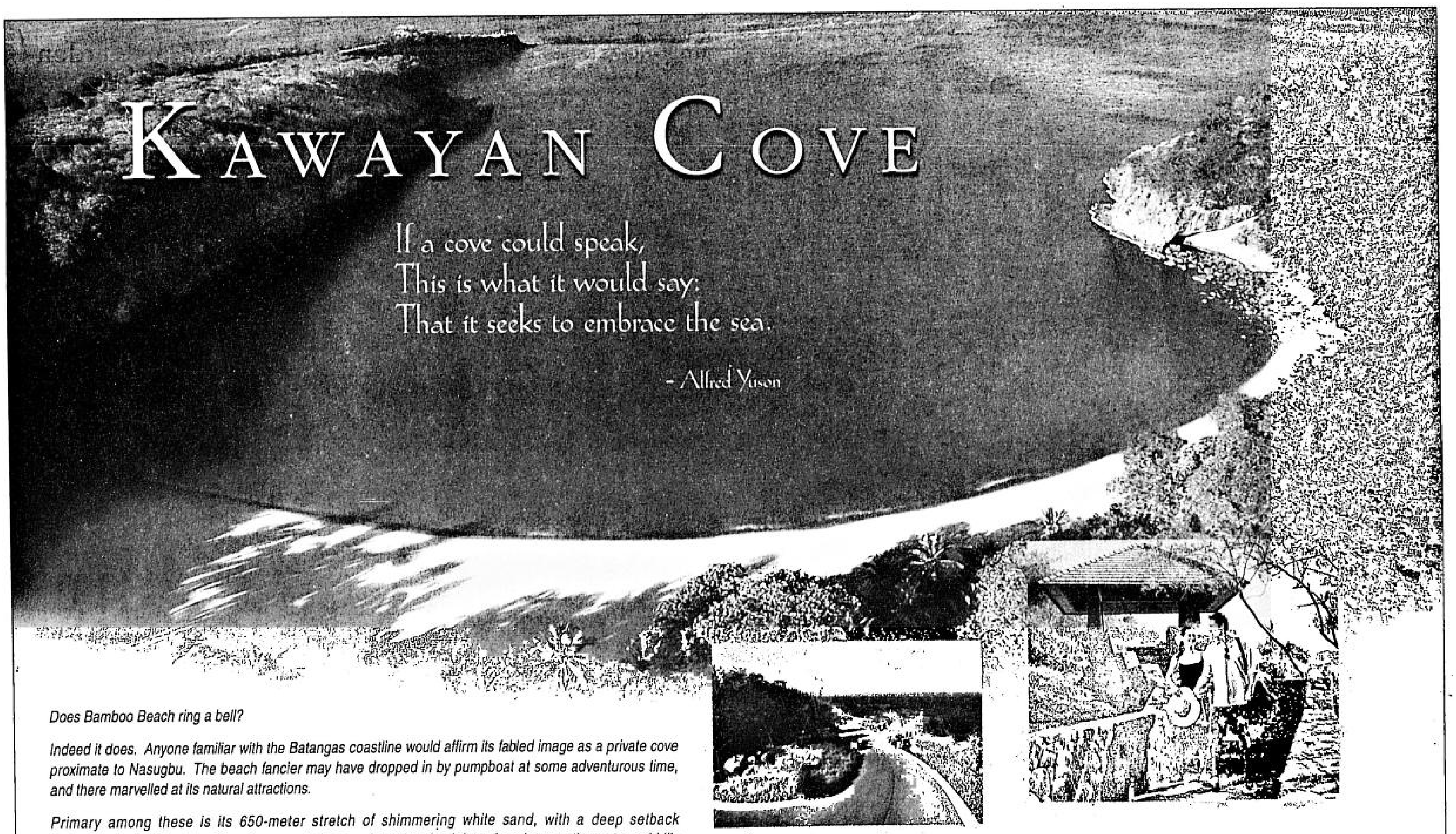

KAWAYAN COVE

If a cove could speak,
This is what it would say:
That it seeks to embrace the sea.
- Alfred Yuson

Does Bamboo Beach ring a bell?

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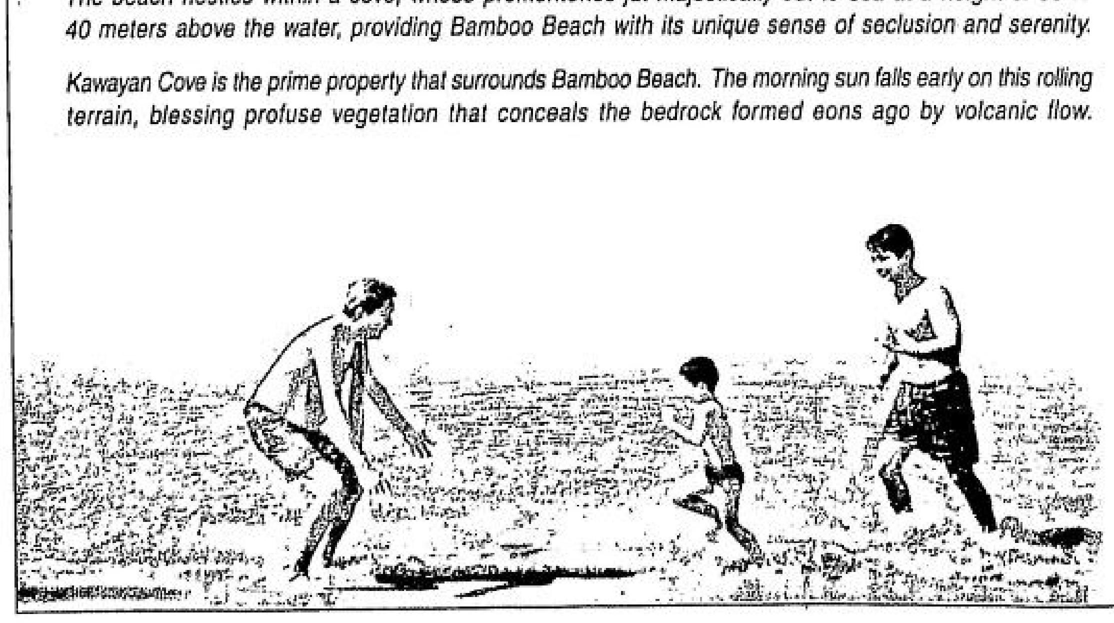

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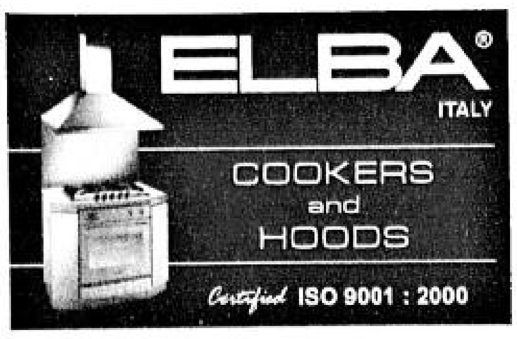
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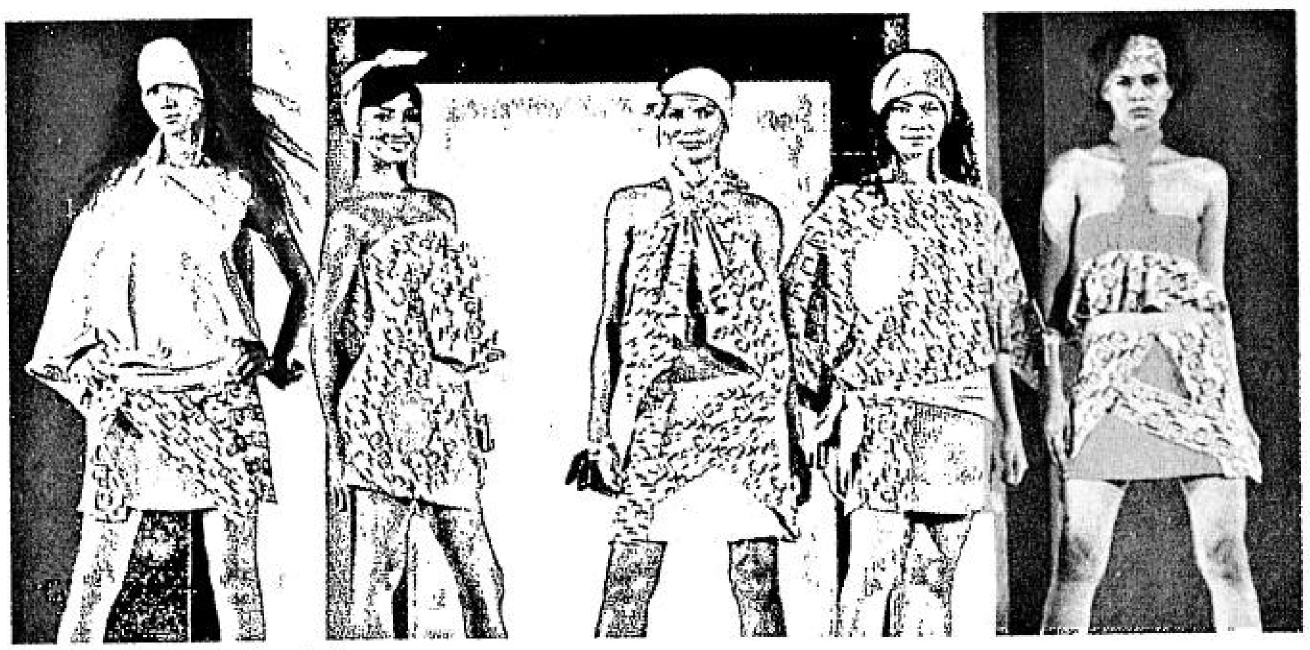
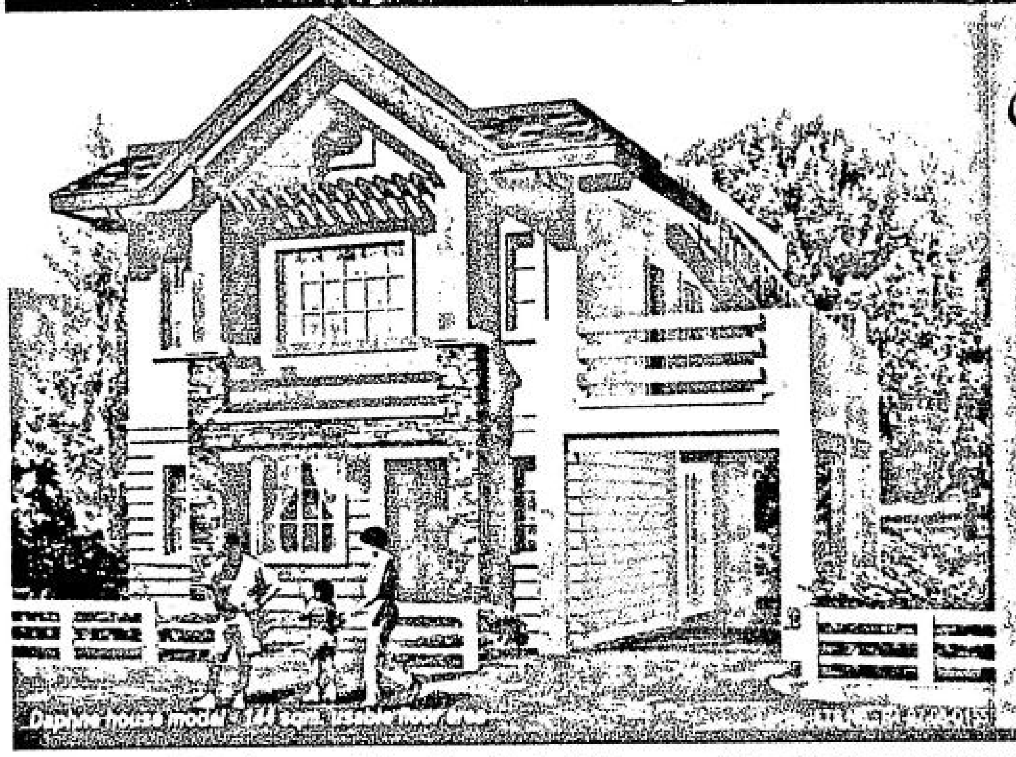

LULU Tan-Gan makes fun clothes.

Story on page E2

The warmth of the country, the luxury of the city.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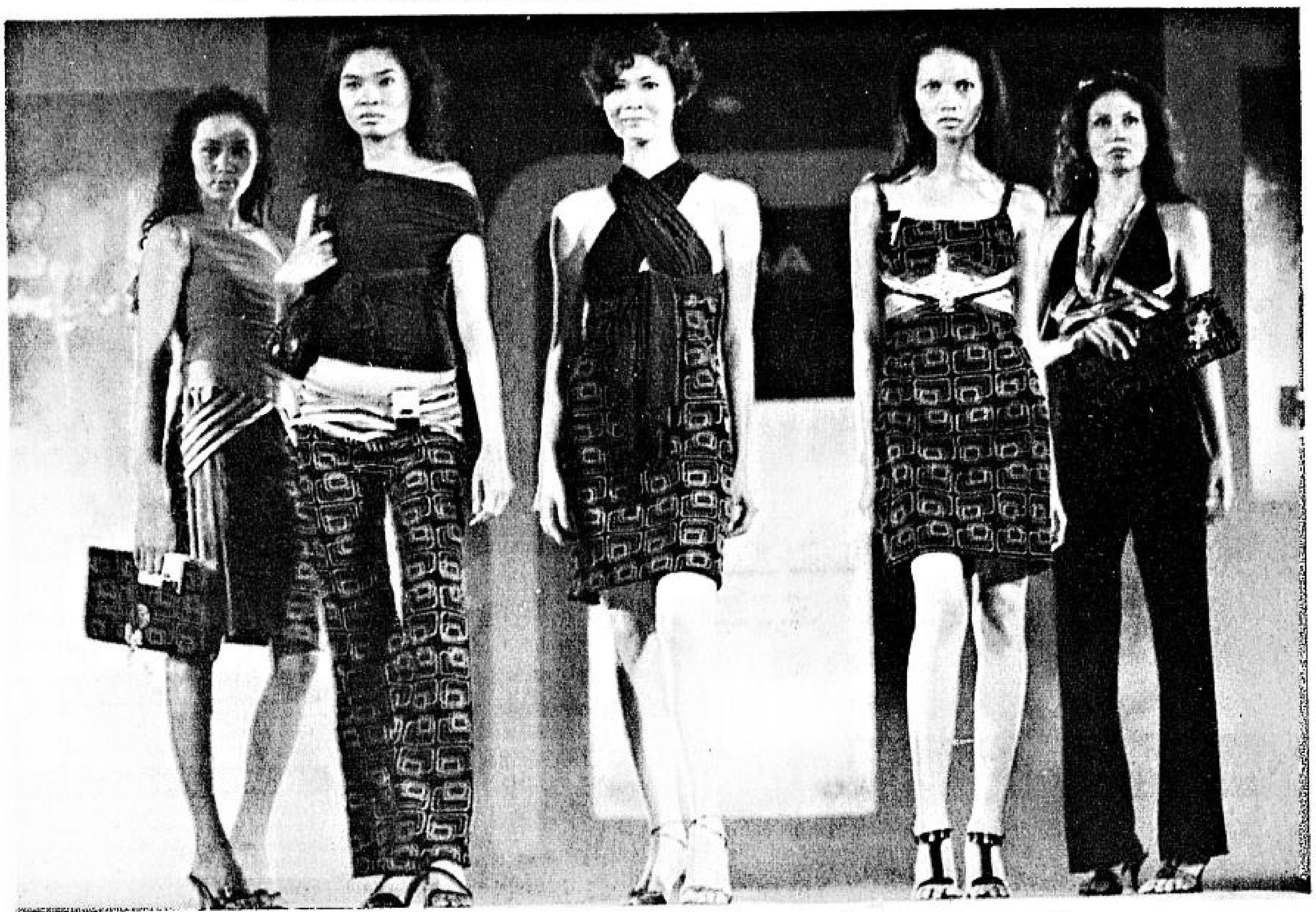
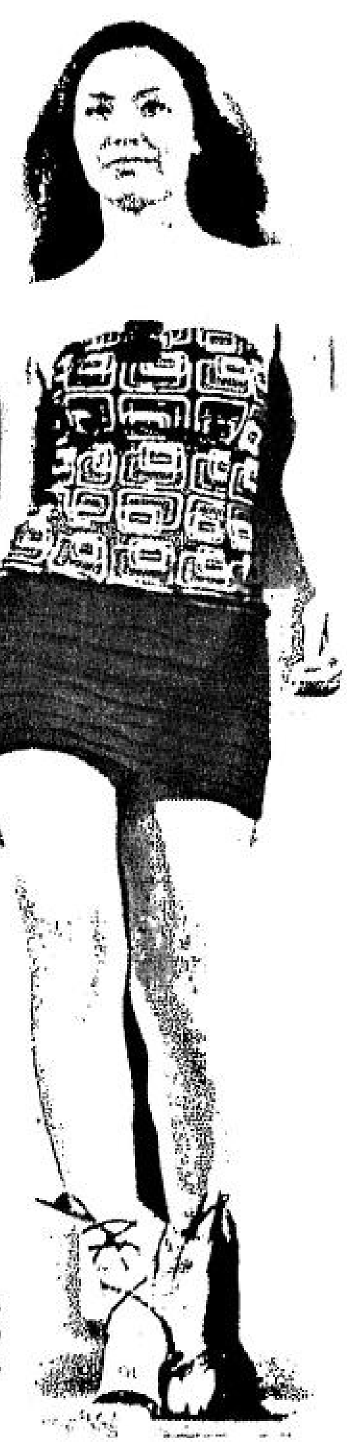


PATRICE Ramos-Diaz fuses stiff and soft.



RHETT Eala gets close to the body.

Mobile Chic

RAJO Laurel

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

WITH numerous models available in the market, Nokia seems to have the ideal phone for everybody. Well, almost everybody.

Surprisingly, after catering to diverse groups—from nature trippers to audiophiles, from workaholics to frustrated photographers—the world's leading mobile-phone maker comes up only now with a unit geared for fashionistas.

The 7200, Nokia's first ever foldable phone, combines form and function with such features as a camera, brilliant color monitor, video recorder and built-in FM radio with hands-free speakers. It also comes with 16 chords of polyphonic ring tones as well as Internet and WAP-browsing capabilities.

DENNIS Lustico

And unlike the popular but bulky 6600, the 7200 is compact and comes with two interchangeable textile covers in black and beige prints. Users can beef up their range of covers as the market offers a number of options beyond the two geometric-inspired prints offered inside the Nokia box.

Much like the express-on covers of Nokia's older models, users can change the color of their 7200 to match their moods and wardrobe.

"It's a dynamic market," says Parikshit Bhasin, country general manager of Nokia Philippines. "As trends and needs change, we have to give what the market wants—a fashionable phone packed with functionality."

And what better way to do it than to launch Nokia's newest phone with a recent fashion show featuring the works of five of the country's top designers at the Power Plant Mall's Plaza Strip.

Produced by Metro magazine, Nokia tapped the likes of Lulu Tan-Gan, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel, Patrice Ramos-Diaz and Dennis Lustico to come up with their respective takes based on the 7200's sleek design and geometric prints.

DENNIS Lustico

Nokia supplied designers with rolls of cotton twill with prints and color combinations patterned after 7200's two textile covers.

Designers such as Tan-Gan, Eala and Ramos-Diaz combined the material with their trademark fabrics, styles and silhouettes. Lustico and Laurel gave draping a rest, and used almost 100 percent cotton twill to come up with a number of structured pieces.

Challenging

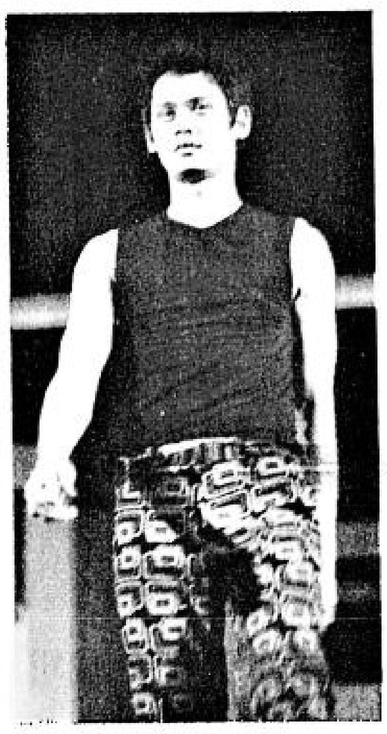
"The fabric was quite difficult to work with because it was quite stiff," says Laurel. "I felt very strongly about using khaki (beige) for the safari look."

The designer, like INQUIRER Lifestyle columnist Tessa Prieto-Valdes, was still basking in the afterglow of his recent African safari adventure. Thus, his collection, which he dubbed as the "Voyager," was composed mainly of tailored pieces such as trench coats, bush jackets, safari shorts and retro-style suits.

"The mobile phone is something you can't live without when you're traveling," he says. "So I wanted to translate that to the modern traveler."

Laurel even had such cute accessories as umbrellas, suitcases, body bags, berets, baseball caps and fedora hats made from the beige variant. Very Burberry!

Tan-Gan also opted for beige to fashion ruffles, panels, ribbons and headbands for her summer collection composed of knitted separates in luscious candy colors. She drew inspiration from the minis of the 1960s and the blousy tops of the 1980s. The collection can be summed up in one word: fun!



RHETT Eala

RAJO Laurel

Metro magazine and Manila's top designers come up with their spin on Nokia's stylish phone for the fashion-conscious

DENNIS Lustico goes stylized retro.

"I don't normally do prints," she says. "But because I enjoy designing, I welcome it as a challenge. And since knits are my forte, it's always fun to combine it with other materials."

Ramos-Diaz, who's also known for her soft and flowing lines, faced a similar challenge. She worked around it, she says, by coming up with a sleek, modern look inspired by the phone itself.

"I mixed the black fabric with draped jersey tops to soften it," she says. "To add some color to the clothes, I accented most of the pieces with bias tapes in various shades of blue, pink and burgundy."

Except for a shift dress, the Nokia pattern was confined to the models' pants and skirts. A pair carried matching bags to pull the look together.

Fitted but fluid

Eala resorted to a similar method by combining black tops with printed bottoms, and vice versa. Unlike Ramos-Diaz, however, his were mostly fitted or structured pieces (with the exception of two) in keeping, perhaps, with his training in RTW.

"I wanted to come up with something fluid," says Eala. "So I put some shine on it to soften the Nokia pattern."

The designer is referring to a sleeveless over blouse made of organdy and beaded with cut beads and sequins. He also did a layered pencil skirt made from strips of silk chiffon with a tail.

The evening's glamour portion belonged to Lustico's sleeveless evening gowns inspired, he says, by the "S-silhouette" from the 19th century. If anything, the structured and paneled numbers with drama in various forms in the back again attested to his versatility.

We particularly like the wrapped detail on one of the models: a flat, rectangular pillow, says Lustico, which was rolled like a fabric. Several behind-the-scene details included pin tucks, exaggerated pouches and stuffed protrusions on the models' derrières.

RAJO Laurel's travel essentials

Lustico echoes his colleagues' observations: "I found the material stiff, but I eventually found a way to work around it. After all, it's still a fabric. I didn't combine it with other materials because I wanted to make it as simple and as straightforward as it is."

Incidentally, for all its vaunted features, the 7200 (with a current market price of P25,000) is no tri-band phone. It may be designed for the jet-setting fashionista, but travelling to New York or Los Angeles with it is out of the question.

"Everybody wants a different phone," says Bhasin, "so we had to create different phones for different segments."

For the meantime, the 7200-wielding fashionista will simply have to settle for such chic destinations as Hong Kong, Milan and Paris.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

Kleptomaniac or plain thief?

DEAR Tita Dulce,

My problem is my younger sister, who is 20 years old and seems to be afflicted with kleptomania.

It probably began in 2001 when money started going missing in the house. At first, the amounts involved were small change, but later bills as much as P1,000 got lost.

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Tita Dulce

When I confronted my sister, she admitted taking the money. She said she could not resist the urge, and she did not think about being caught and punished. She cried, apologized and promised not to do it again.

We all forgot about it until last year when my elder sister told me that she was missing several hundred pesos. Later my younger sister admitted to me that she took the money. Again, she apologized, and explained she just could not resist stealing the money. Something worse happened just last month: My sister was caught shoplifting a blouse.

Fortunately, the department store manager agreed to let us settle the matter. I had to pay more than a thousand pesos (six times the price of the blouse) so the store would not file a police report and have my sister's photo posted on store walls.

I can't understand why my sister gets the urge to steal. We are not poor, she's well-fed and provided for. She and my youngest sister go to college, and they get the same allowance, which the youngest swears is quite sufficient for her needs.

I fear that she would get into worse troubles. What should we do?

KUYA

Let's not jump to the conclusion that she has kleptomania. Find out first if she has costly vices—drugs, alcohol, gambling—or if she hangs out with friends with expensive tastes or habits. If she has been stealing to feed her vices, she might not have kleptomania but a simple case of financial distress.

A kleptomaniac steals purely to satisfy an impulse, not because she has any real use for the thing she takes. In contrast, a thief, or one with a criminal mind, steals because she needs the stolen good for her personal use, or to convert it to cash to pay for some vice or something she cannot steal. A kleptomaniac, of course, might later have expensive vices, but she probably acquired them only to dispose of what she stole.

If your sister has been stealing to feed some costly habits, then you could focus on eliminating those vices. If she is into drugs or alcohol, you should have her rehabilitated.

If she's into bad company, you should keep her away from them and have her undergo professional counseling. In short, you should treat her acts of stealing as a side effect of her vices. Eliminate the vices, and you eliminate the side effect.

In kleptomania, there is an urge to steal that could be the result of a serious and deep-seated psychological problem. To cure kleptomania, the hidden problem should first be eliminated.

Diagnosing a person as a kleptomaniac, as well as discovering and treating the root of the disorder, is a job for psychiatrists and not for lay people like us. So bring your sister to a psychiatrist as soon as possible.

Help your sister stay away from trouble by keeping her chaperoned when she steps out of the house. At home, keep cash and expensive easy-to-pocket-things out of sight so they would not tempt your sister.

Keep in mind that, if your sister is truly afflicted with kleptomania, she does not have a communicable disease, so don't treat her like a leper. A kleptomaniac is not a lawbreaker in the usual sense, so don't treat her like a criminal.

Above all, keep in mind that this is probably the worst time of her life—she may be most confused about herself, and may even doubt if she could love herself.

If this is how she feels, meet her confusion with understanding and erase her doubts with love.

E-mail the author at titadulce2003@yahoo.com or send letters to P.O. Box 2353, Makati CPO 1263 Makati City, or PDI office.

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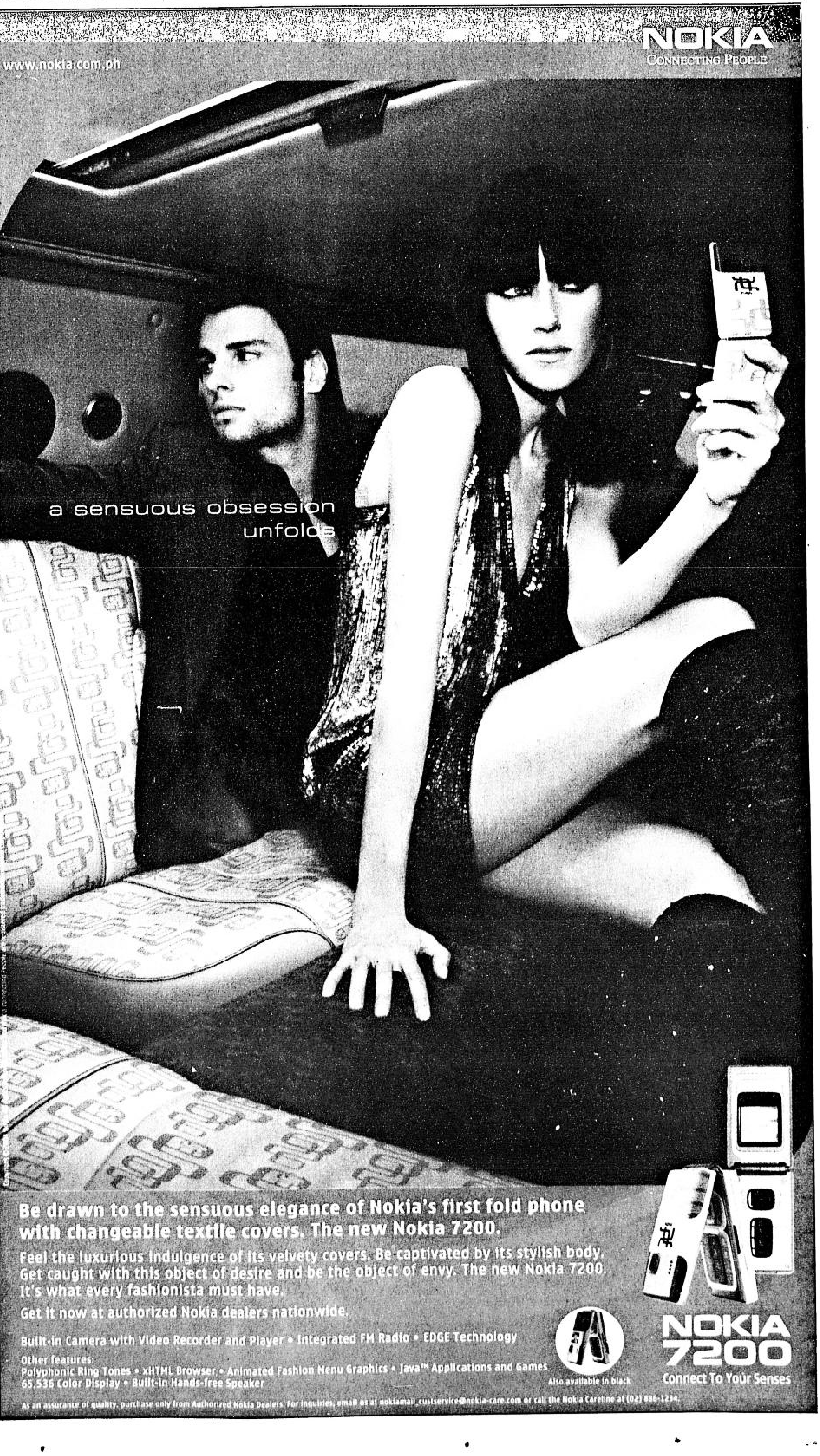

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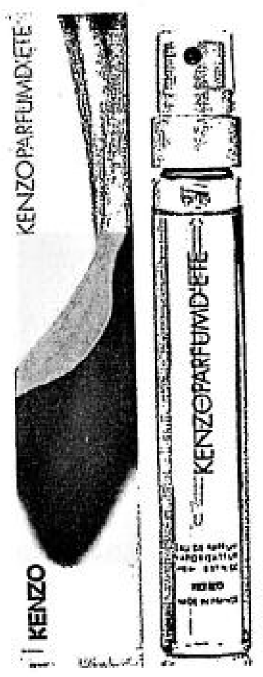
KENZO introduces the radiant scent of Parfum D'ete—a green floral fragrance that enables you to relive the pleasures of summer all year long.

Parfum D'ete is all about sweet sun-splashed memories. Enveloping scents of jasmine, peony, hyacinth and peach blossom form a floral accord, slowly mingling with the quaint smell of natural green leaf, lily of the valley and aquatic lotus.

Also available are complementary products that promote comfort and soft sensations—Parfum D'ete Body Milk and Shower Gel.

Every purchase of Parfum D'ete products comes with a complimentary eight-ml bottle of the fragrance. Handy in a travel size package, it's perfect for spraying on anytime, anywhere. Offer is valid until April 2004.

Kenzo Parfum D'ete, available in all leading department stores nationwide, is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp.



PARFUM D'ete by Kenzo

Grace and spontaneity in one fragrance

VERY Irresistible by Givenchy is a first-ever aromatic floral scent that takes inspiration from the French designer's two favorite muses—one a Hollywood legend of grace and elegance, and the other a stunning young actress.

The perfume's passionate floral notes is an ode to Audrey Hepburn, whose partnership with Givenchy changed the world of fashion forever. Roses, in a multiplicity of origins and notes, make up Very Irresistible's foundation, reflecting Hepburn's classicism and impeccable taste.

The seductive notes of star anise and verbena leaves then adds a surprising twist, an unexpected note of fantasy amid the purity of the flowers. Breathtaking beauty Liv Tyler represents this sensation, which gives rise to spontaneity, impertinence, daring and sensuality.

Marrying contradictions, Very Irresistible Givenchy spans a woman's infinite moods, encasing its magic in a pink bottle shaped like Givenchy's mark of femininity—the exclamation point.

From sweet maiden to memorable muse, feel Very Irresistible like the Givenchy woman. The scent is available in all leading department stores nationwide. Exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp.

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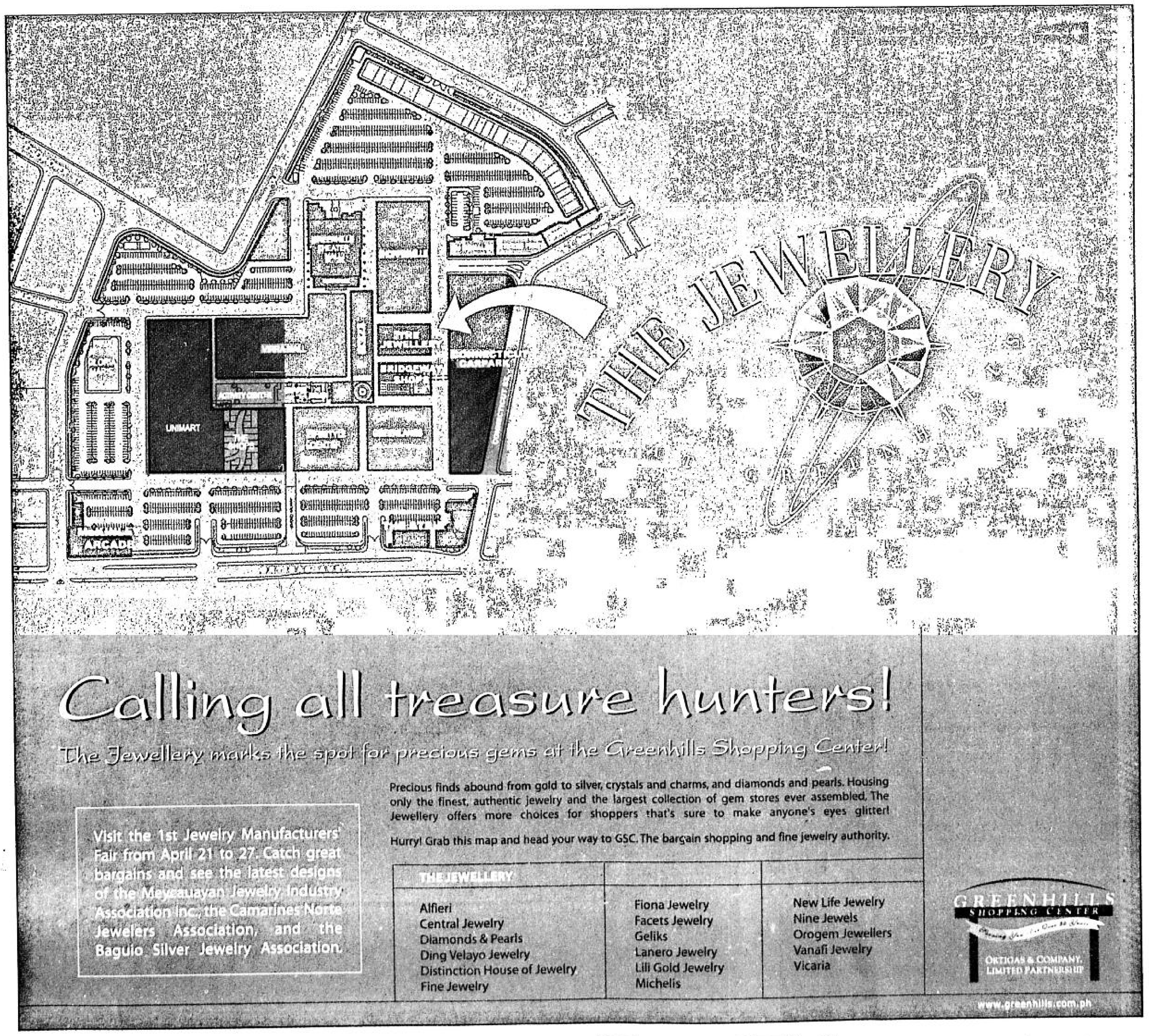

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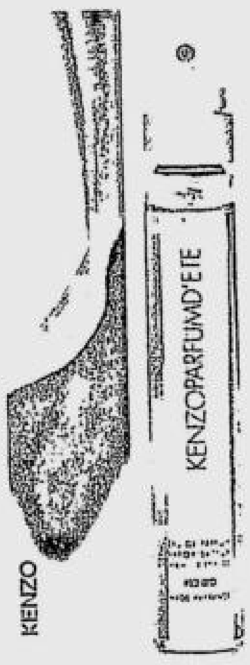

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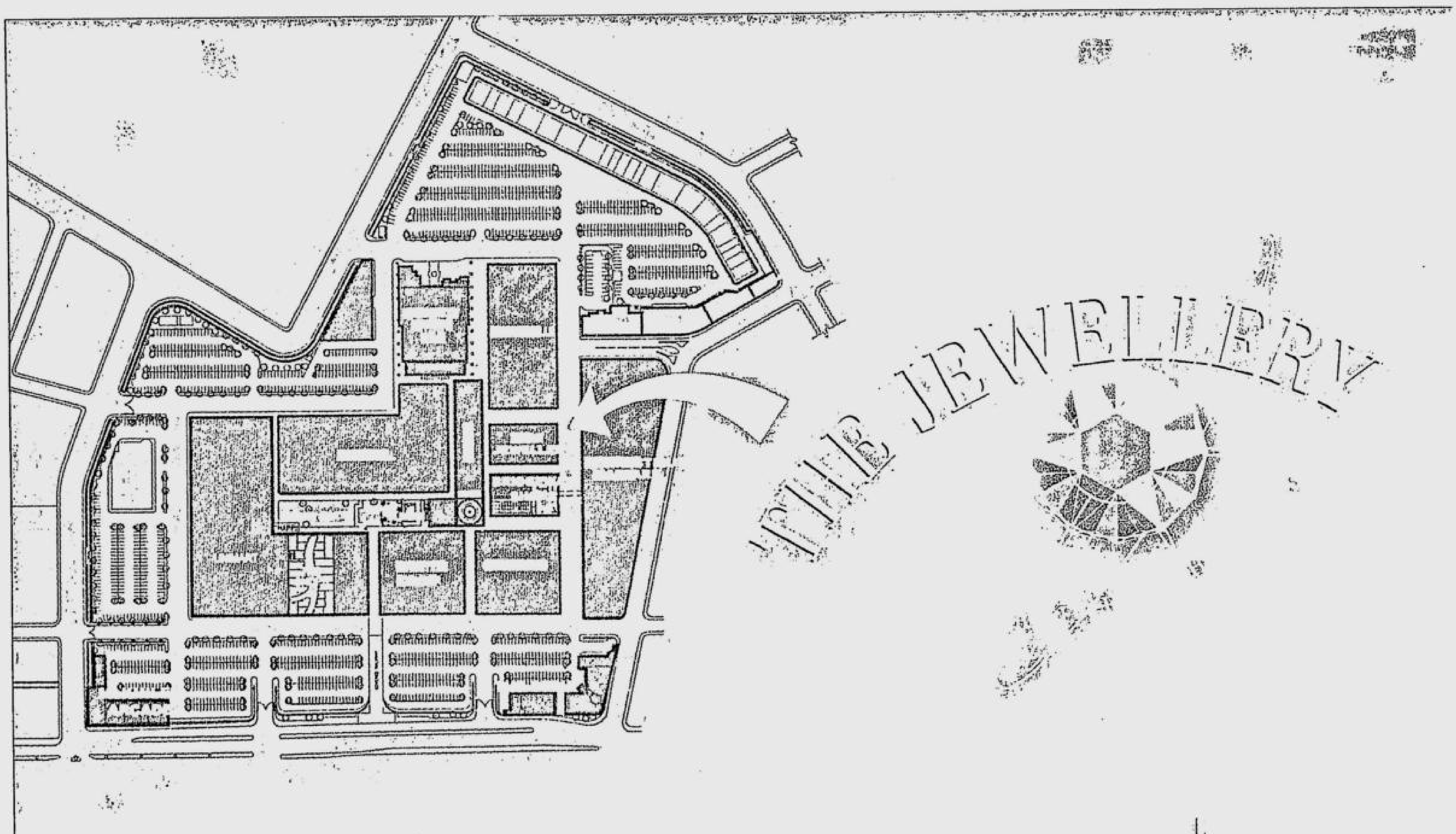

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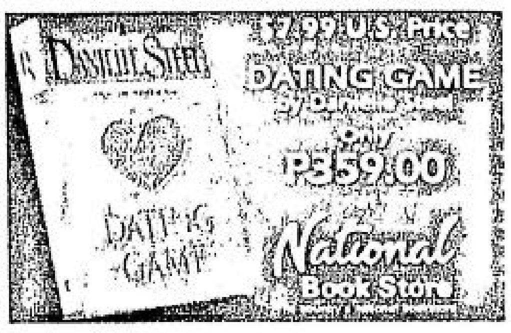
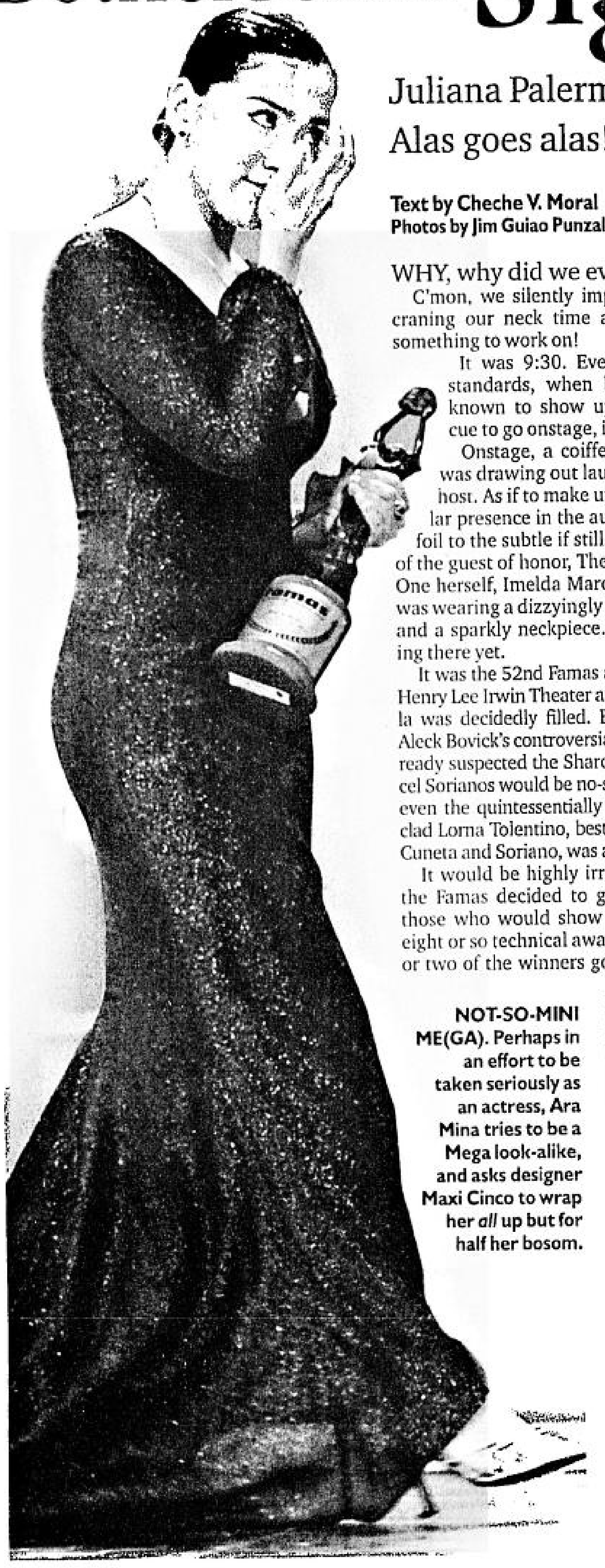


Bothersome sights in boring Famas

Juliana Palermo does a Janet Jackson, Ai Ai de las Alas goes alas!, and Ara Mina does a Mega

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan



NOT-SO-MINI ME(GA). Perhaps in an effort to be taken seriously as an actress, Ara Mina tries to be a Mega look-alike, and asks designer Maxi Cinco to wrap her *all* up but for half her bosom.

WHY, why did we even bother?

C'mon, we silently implored, impatiently, craning our neck time and again. Give us something to work on!

It was 9:30. Even by awards night standards, when big-name stars are known to show up only before their cue to go onstage, it was late.

Onstage, a coiffed Ai Ai de las Alas was drawing out laughs as the evening's host. As if to make up for the lack of stellar presence in the audience and create a foil to the subtle if still awe-inspiring rocks of the guest of honor, The Perpetually Coiffed One herself, Imelda Marcos, the comedienne was wearing a dizzyingly glittery ruffled dress and a sparkly neckpiece... But we're not going there yet.

It was the 52nd Famas awards night and the Henry Lee Irwin Theater at the Ateneo de Manila was decidedly filled. But after bold starlet Aleck Bovick's controversial win last year, we already suspected the Sharon Cunetas and Maricel Sorianos would be no-shows this year. Heck, even the quintessentially Paul Cabral column-clad Lorna Tolentino, best-actress nominee like Cuneta and Soriano, was absent!

It would be highly irrational to think that the Famas decided to give trophies only to those who would show up; after all, in the eight or so technical awards, we saw only one or two of the winners go up the stage. But it was also quite suspicious that, in the acting category, only the winners chose to be present. They must've known way ahead. Or, the other nominees had been hired for the campaign trail.

'Fat lady'

But it's true what they say, it ain't over till the fat lady *walks in*.

Okay, okay, so Ara Mina is hardly what you would call fat, but we had to do a double take when we saw her clingy midnight-blue jersey-clad form à la opera diva walk in. Only the generous show of cleavage assured us it wasn't the Mega. The sexy actress must've been going for that respectable grownup look

BOTHERSOME/ F2

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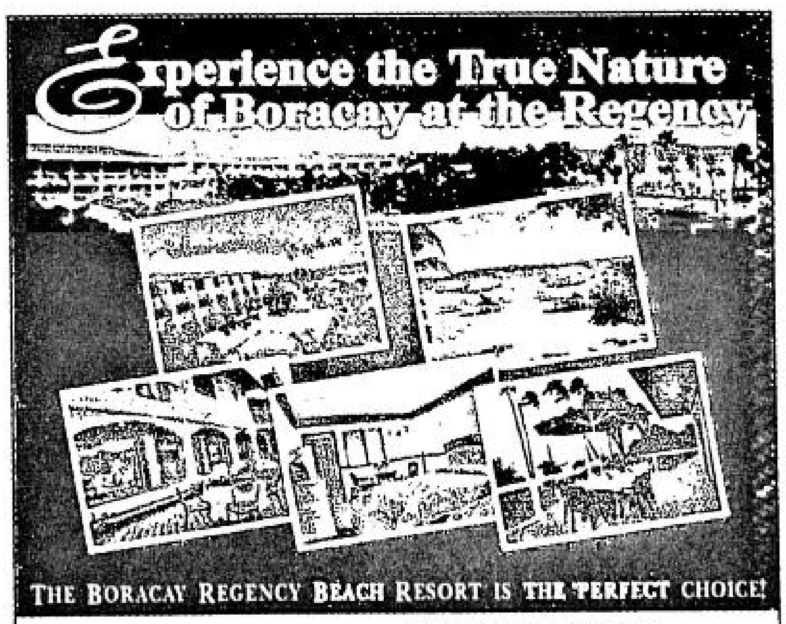

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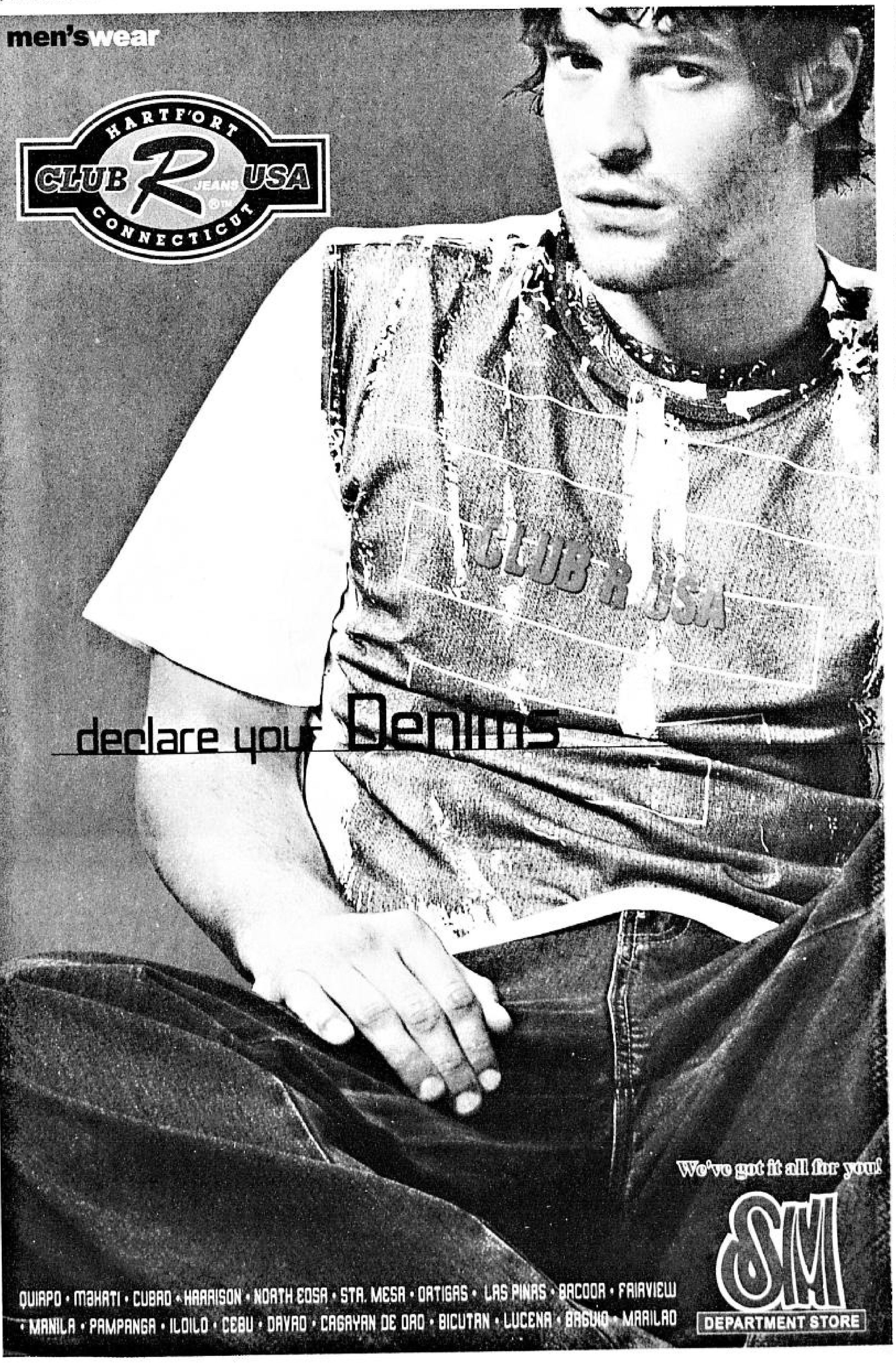
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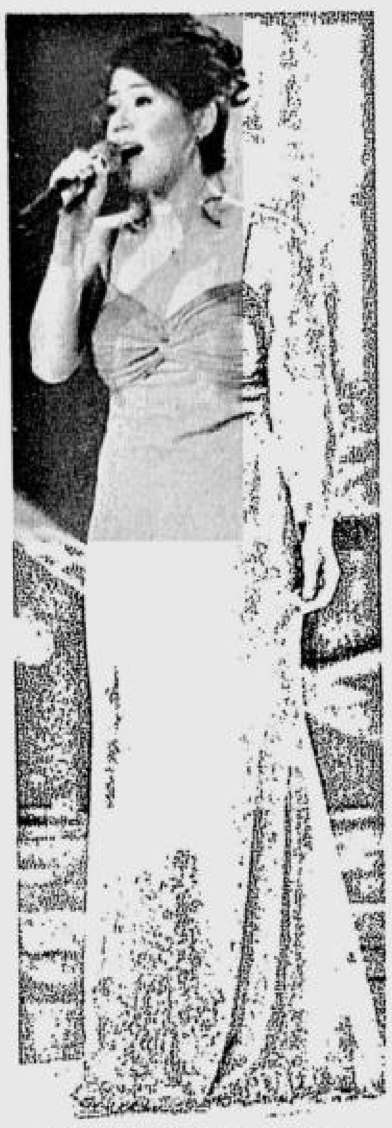
GAG HAG. Ai Ai de las Alas *is* funny without dressing up silly. She obviously doesn't know that.

SILLY BELLY. She has a pretty face and trim bod, but we can't bring ourselves to like this silver dress on Angelika de la Cruz. The cutout detail is just incongruous and silly.

SHOO LACE. Who says you can't wear your curtains, sport a grandma 'do and go to the Famas? Certainly not Nikki Valdez.

ARE YOU KIDDING? If this shapeless, so-so dress can win Tanya Garcia the Star of the Night award, it's no wonder stars exert little effort to dress up fabulously for awards nights.

IS YOUR NAME LARA? Chynna Hortaleza mimics Ms Flynn Boyle at the 2003 Golden Globes in this tutu-like cocktail number that looks more ridiculous than cute.



OFF-KEY. Comebacking singer Roselle Nava hits a foul note by donning this dowdy sheath.

Bothersome sights in boring Famas

CIRCUS ACT. With her bird's nest hair and magician's cape, we hoped Celia Rodriguez would go pfft!

From page F1

befitting a best-actress trophy: She was wrapped to her wrists, for crying out loud. But we're sure, contrary to what the actress said, it wasn't the dress that won her the trophy.

Fashion-wise, it was slim pickings, all right, that even the Star of the Night award was given to young actress Tanya Garcia. If only for her pretty face, Garcia deserved to take home the special award. The gracious girl acknowledged her gown's designer, but we say, no thanks. The halter gown was shapeless, bordering on the dowdy. It even had two itty-bitty peepholes on the neckline that couldn't decide whether to go daring or be coyly teasing.

"*Magaling naman po ako talaga,*" asserted veteran actress Celia Rodriguez in her acceptance speech after winning the supporting-actress plum. We couldn't agree more, so it's a pity that the US-based thespian rarely makes movies now. We hoped, however, that we could say the same about her flowing fuchsia cape of a dress.

Could she have had bunnies and doves hidden underneath there like those circus magicians? We only wished she'd have wrapped the cape over her head and did a David Copperfield to spare us the dreadful sight of her bird's nest 'do.

Glorious Romero

We have to give our nod to proud septuagenarian Gloria Romero, who dressed her age and yet didn't come out looking frumpy. If a bit underdressed for the occasion, the lifetime-achievement awardee managed to look dignified in a yellow pants ensemble with minimal beading. Ditto for presenter and fellow veteran actress Delia Razon, who was equally pleasing in a red pants number.

Tall and tan, and young and lovely... Those were the qualities of bold starlet Juliana Palermo as she approached the podium in a halter of graduated shades of blue by Larry Espinosa. Masterful draping on the part of the designer plus Palermo's whistle-bait measurements were a surefire combo for a stunning vision. At last!

But wait... They really had to push it. How, in just one stroke—or in this case, a handful of tinsel—could they turn something superbly sexy to downright tacky? A closer look revealed a smattering of shiny thingees was placed on Palermo's nipples, apparently to conceal them as they threatened to peek through the gauzy fabric. Oh yeah? Something else is used for that, and it's called a lining.

Funny woman De las Alas' self-deprecating antics and sketches and costumes might play well with Filipino audiences. But on Famas night, we were sorely disappointed that toward the show's end, she changed into a dress that was one or two sizes too small. It pinched her flesh, creating a ghastly fold that resembled a butt crack on her upper back.

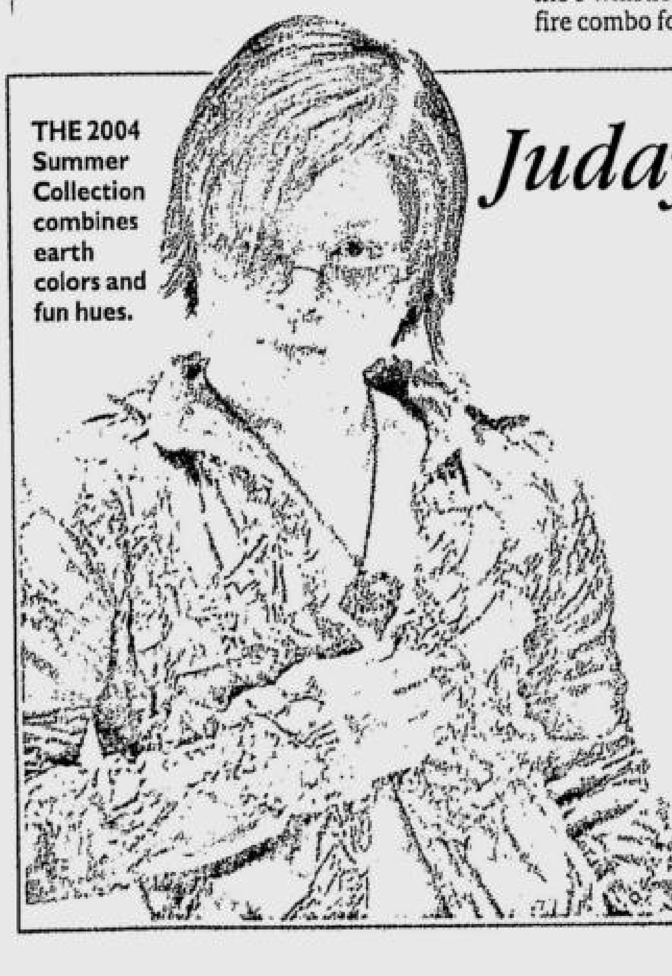
De las Alas is a truly talented comedian, and it pained us to see that she would come dressed in those gaudily beaded gowns. The script didn't call for her to look comical, so why the clothes? We're sure had she come in less elaborate ensembles, she would've cracked up the audience just the same. For starters, she was nicely coiffed; nowhere were those outrageous headdresses. We hope to see her nicely dressed next time.

So there. Big stars or no big stars, the Famas would have shocks and surprises for the media to work on. And that's why we always bother.

E-mail the author at cmoral@inquirer.com.ph

LOOK AT ME, LOOK AT ME! With Cindy Kurleto's teeny-weeny black panties and whatnot showing through her sheer dress, and only a sprinkling of tinsel to serve as Juliana Palermo's (right) "nipple guard," these two girls have everyone's attention.

Juday's pick of the season



THE 2004 Summer Collection combines earth colors and fun hues.

A TRAVELING must for the long vacation is a fashionable pair of Pacific Blue Shades.

Its hot lineup of new models will surely give you the right pair for any activity. Whether you're on the beach basking in the sun, taking a leisurely walk in the malls or waiting for a flight to a holiday, there is always a pair that will fit your personal style and make you look your best.

The Pacific Blue Shades 2004 Summer Collection combines earth colors and summer fun hues. Basic designs with full rim shades in metal and acetate have flattering shapes while rimless pieces have basic and clean shapes. Lenses come in brown, smoke and flash white mirror.

The cylindrical lens collection has smoke, brown and flash mirror lenses, the current fashion trend in Asia.

The one-piece cut lens collection is also a hot accessory for the hot months.

Take a cue from young superstar Judy Ann Santos who, personifying the fun and cool nature of the whole shades collection, repeats as Pacific Blue Shades Girl.

You, too, can stand out in the crowd like Santos in one of the vibrantly hued, stylish Pacific Blue Shades.

YOUNG superstar Judy Ann Santos personifies the stylish and cool Pacific Blue collection.

A range of fashion moods and colors

FOR the new Spring/Summer season, Elle offers resolutely seductive trends with sophisticated and silky fabrics that illustrate great sensuality.

A fascinating range of colors, moods and silhouettes is offered, including:

Sensual attitude. Refinement and sophistication emerge through soft and feminine fabrics in which the handle and body-on-body effect take on their full dimension. Sophisticated colors and light patterns are key.

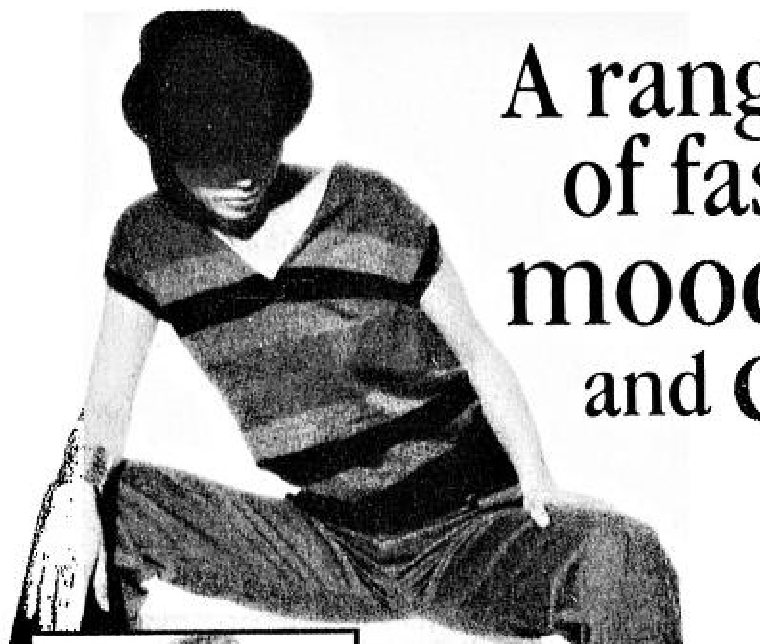
Paradise beauty. Bewitching flowers, shimmering colors, a touch of lightness evoke paradise. The silhouette is fun-filled and charmingly witty.

Fresh exotic. Lemon yellow, palm leaf, ocean floor: a refreshing exotic world in which flavors reach their heights. Fresh, crisp cuts evoke faraway islands, exotic fruits and high summers.

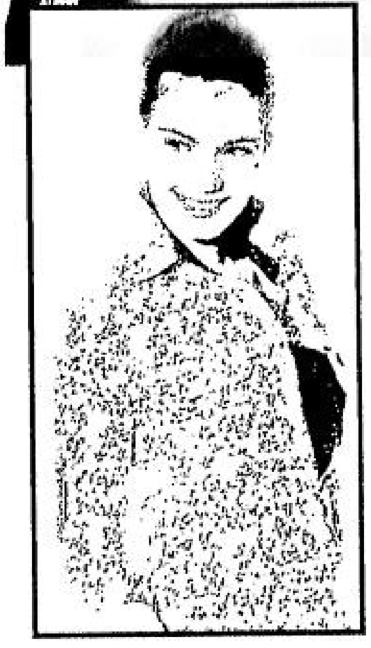
Elle Paris. Essential yet trendy collections that target chic, confident, modern, career-minded women (aged 25 to 35 years). The clothes and accessories are simple, elegant and affordable. For someone who enjoys life, this is an utterly stylish collection.

Elle sport. Young, fresh and relaxed casual lines that make for leisurely weekends and a laidback lifestyle.

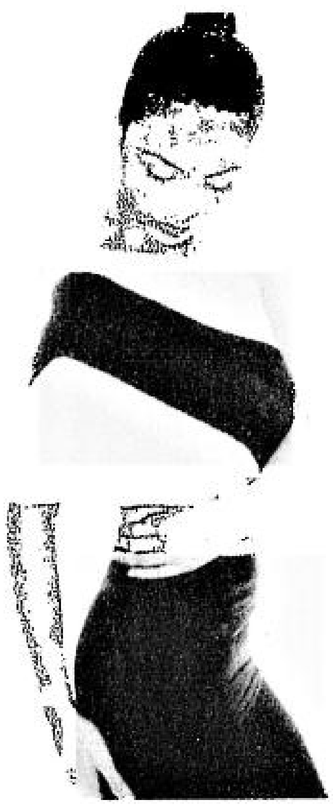
Elle active. A sportswear line, practical yet stylish and sporty, designed for the dynamic, health-conscious individual.



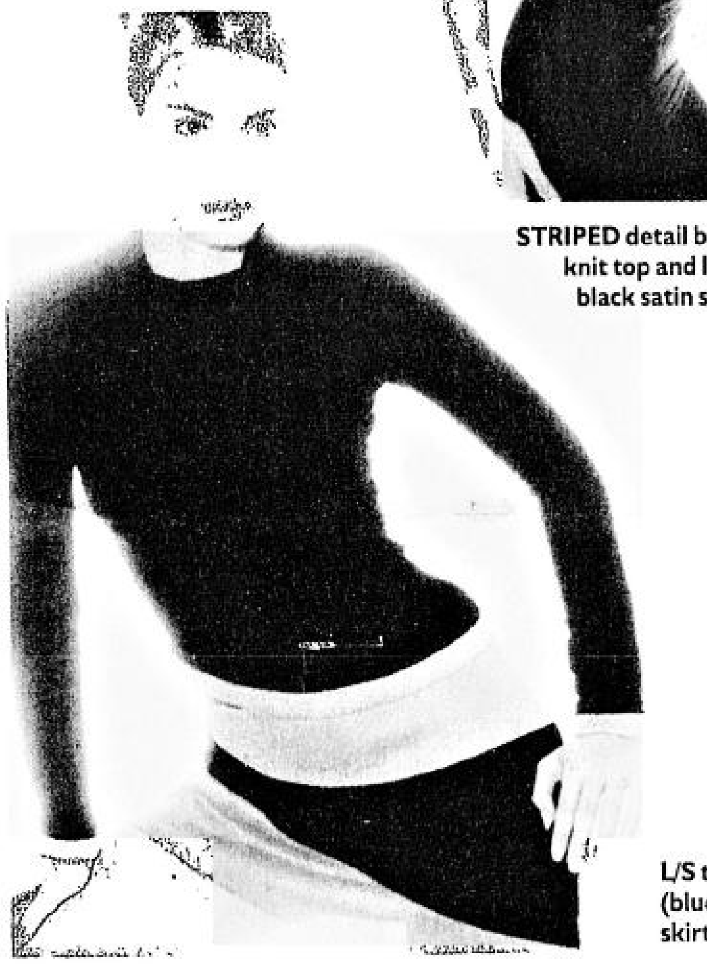
BLACK and brown V-neck blouse, green flap back pocket pants and hat with striped inner lining



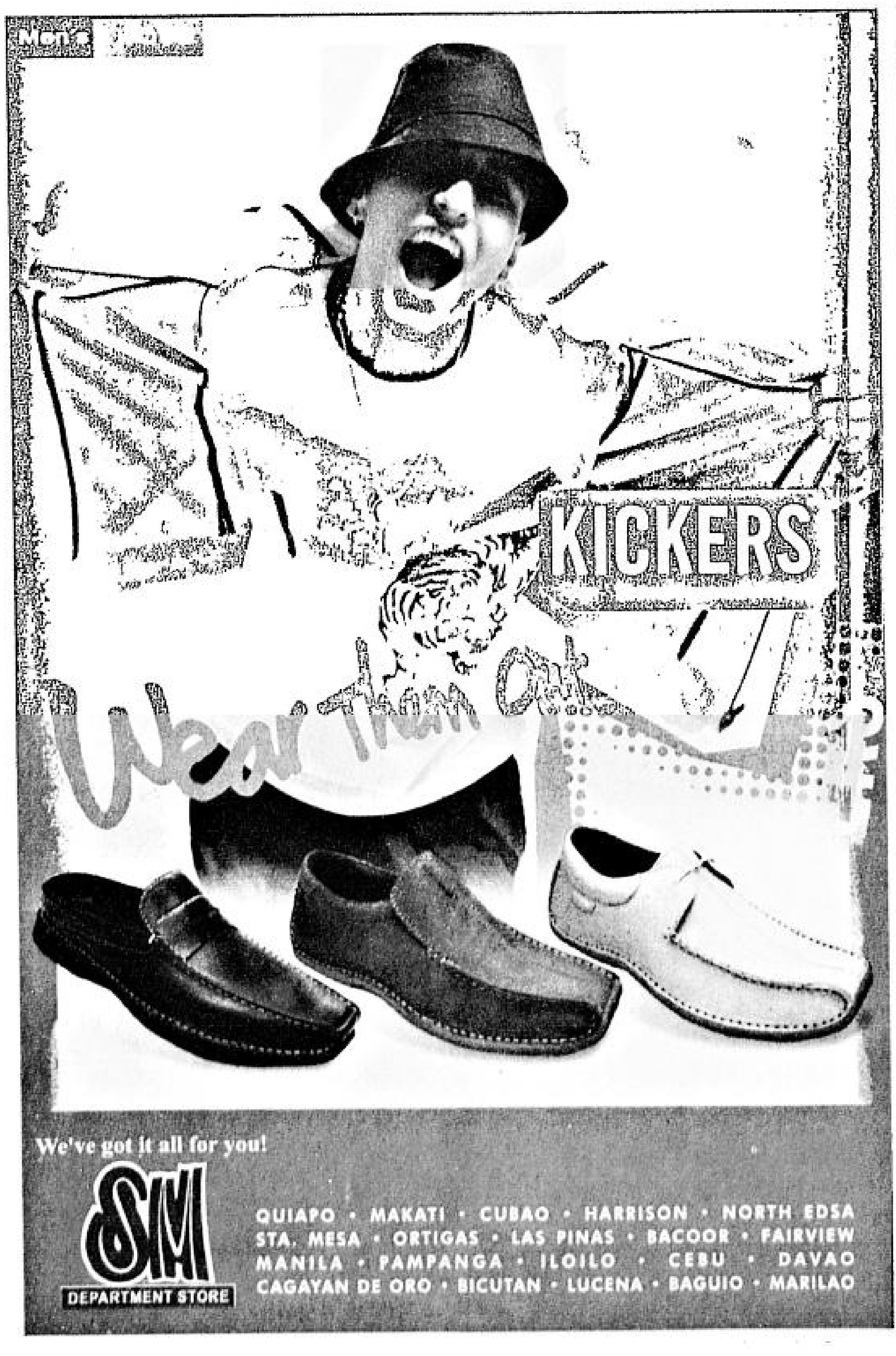
BLUE ¾ with two front pockets floral printed blouse, army green S/L Elle Sports in round neck tee and two zip pocket pants with side belt loops



STRIPED detail band knit top and long black satin skirt



L/S turtle neck blouse (blue/black) and blue/black skirt



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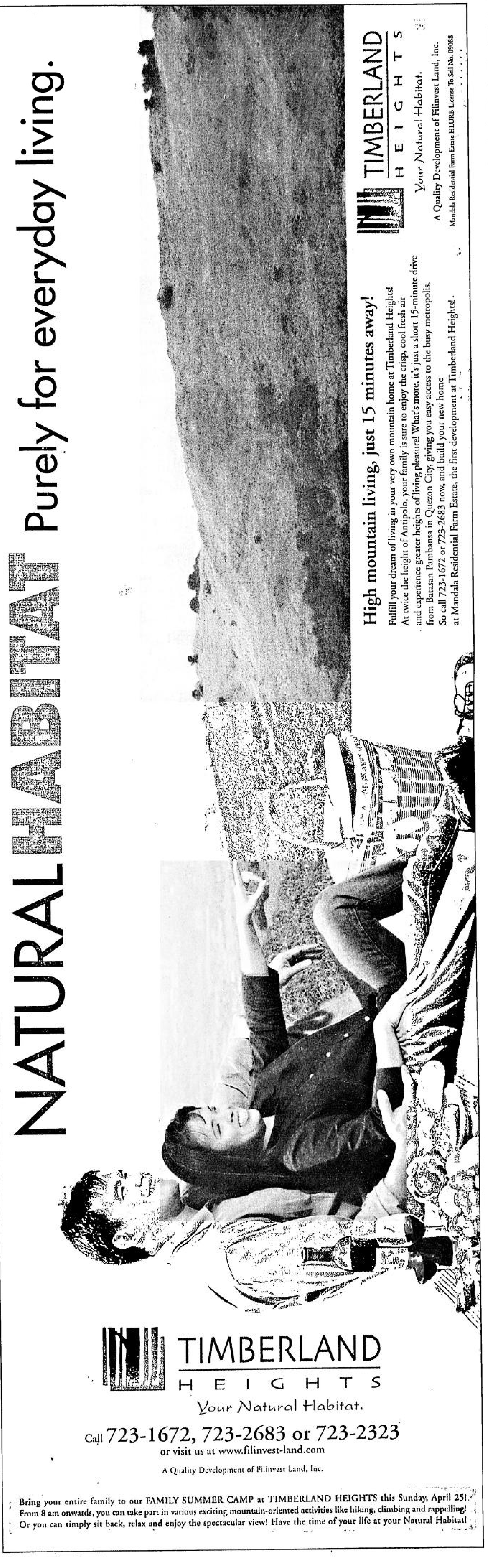
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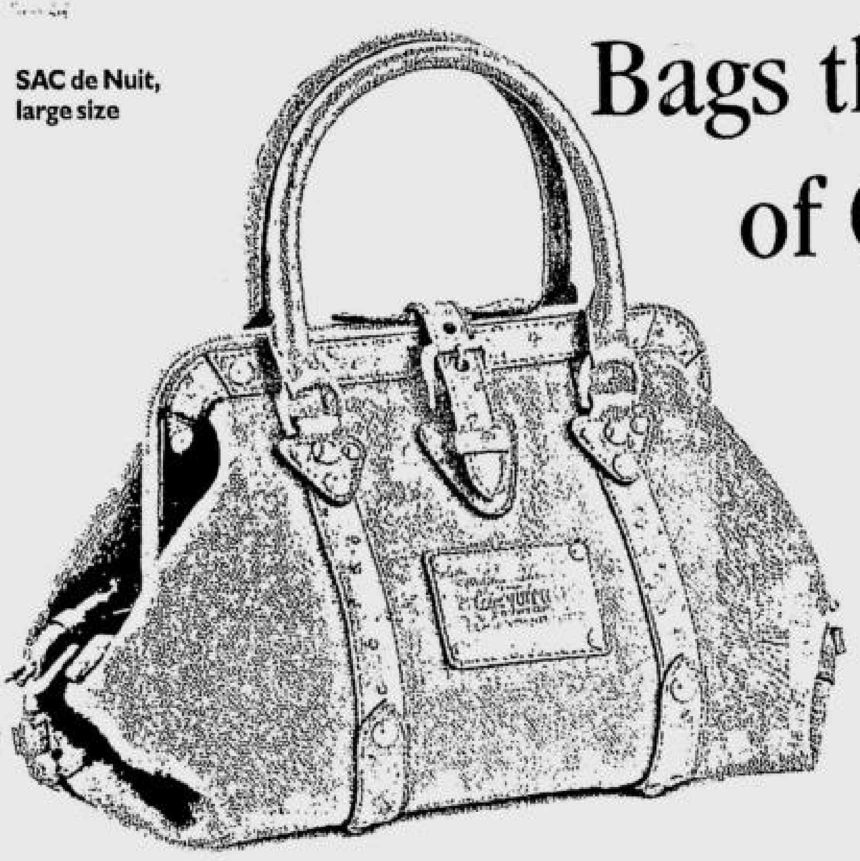
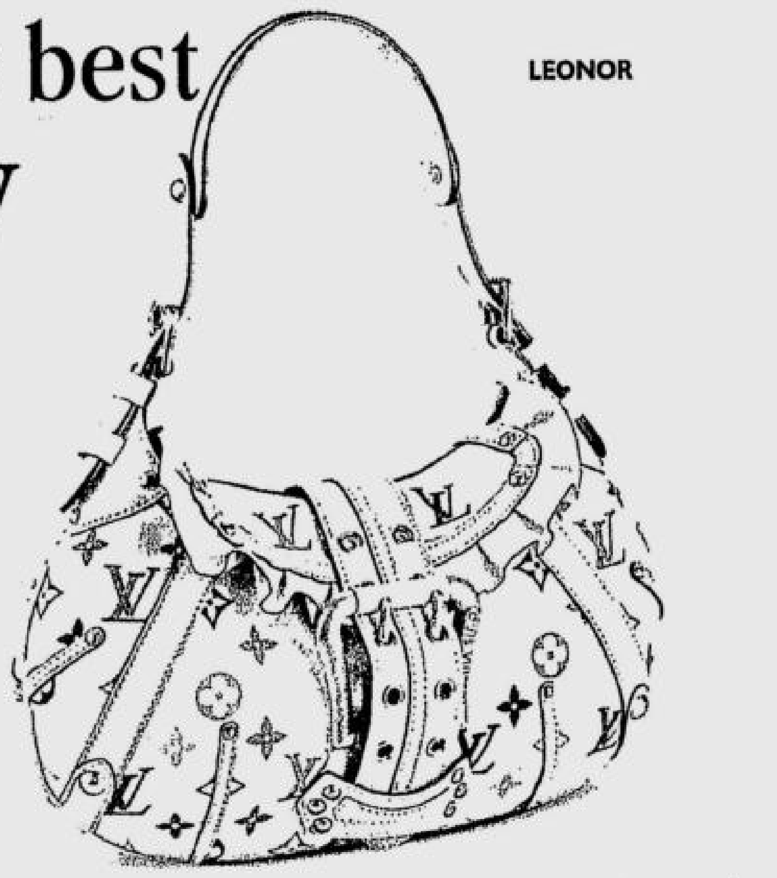
Bags that combine the best of old and new



SAC de Nuit, large size



LEONOR

THE WOMEN'S Leathergoods Collection of Louis Vuitton's Spring/Summer 2004 line combines the best elements of heritage and modernity.

The Sac de Nuit runs the gamut of shapes and colors. The olive, hemp and off-white Toile Trianon canvas is ornamented with rust, turquoise and lilac ostrich. These warm and luxurious colors bring to mind fashion refinement.

The inside in striped canvas is a reference to the first Louis Vuitton trunks, and the embossed signature on the outside tag is a clever reminder of the 150th anniversary of the LV House.

Just like the Sac de Nuit, the Express Bag draws its inspiration from the history of LV. The Express Bag also comes in Toile Trianon, a string colored canvas with an ostrich outline in bright colors such as lilac or turquoise. Old LV trunks also inspired metallic details.

Variations on the sample theme are used for the large Theda Bag, the shining star of the new season. The choice of materials and colors is multiplied and details are more exceptional: brown and golden leather for the Toile Monogram Midi canvas, off-white and golden ostrich Toile Trianon, or turquoise and beige goat suede with a golden serigraphy.

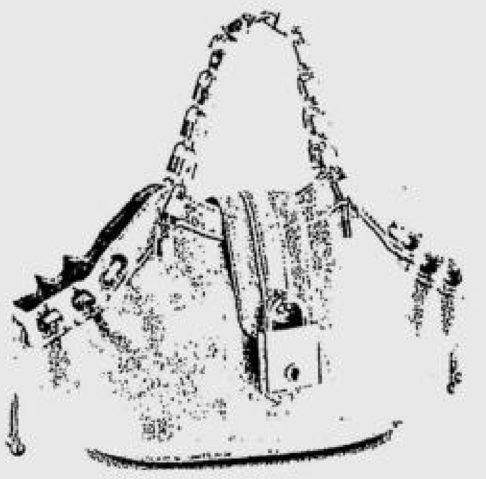
The Theda bag will also come in Toile Monogram and a Monogram Multicolore version with a white backing in order to go through all the seasons.

As an evening bag, the small, beige Theda suede goat model with its gold Monogram bears the name of Theda Bara, an actress from the '20s who originally played the role of Cleopatra.

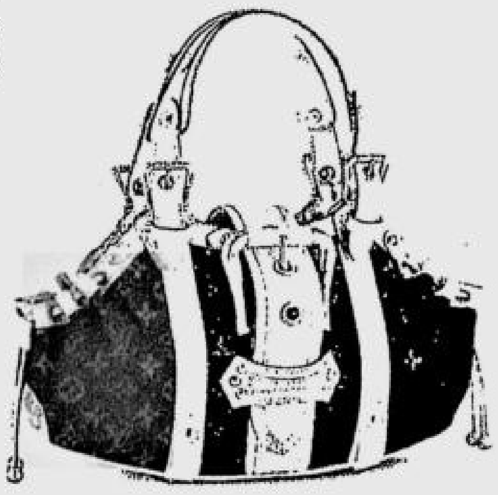
One particularity of the small Theda models, which exist in a lambskin version embossed in bronze or turquoise goat suede with a gold serigraphy, is that the handles are made of small gold metal lockets.

The Leonor Bag, with its original and practical shape, and in classic or Multicolore Monogram canvas on white backing, is a glamorous, imposing piece. Its very feminine allure conveys a keen sense of elegance.

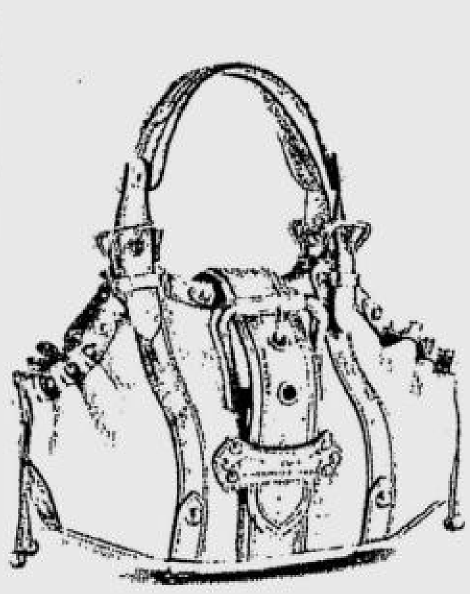
In the Philippines, Louis Vuitton is located at G/L, Greenbelt IV, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 8130637 or visit www.vuitton.com



THEDA, small size



THEDA, large size



THEDA, large size

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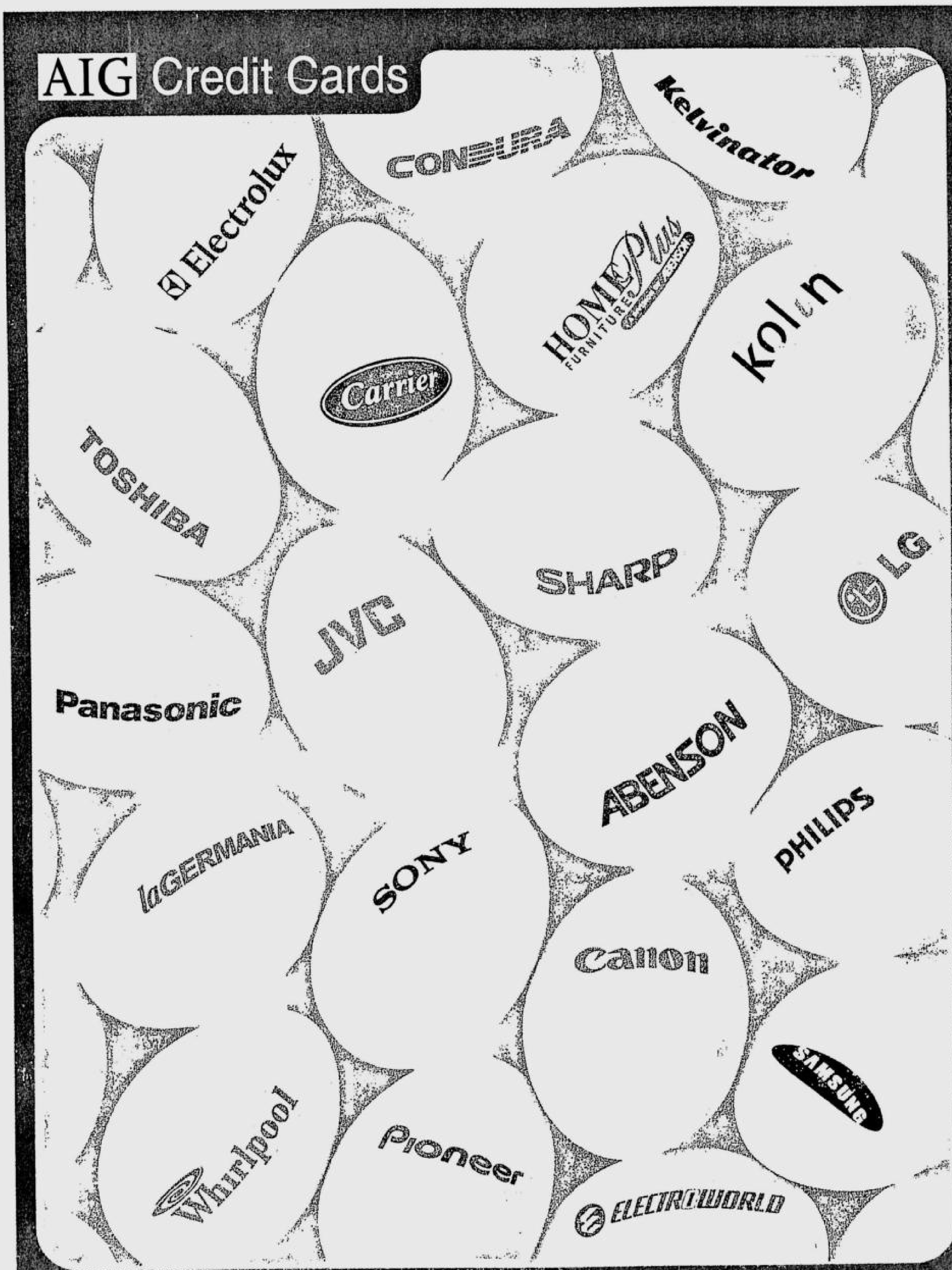

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LIFESTYLE

BLOWING candles among the stars. President Macapagal-Arroyo blows out the lone candle on her birthday cake. Looking on are Gina de Venecia, Ai Ai de las Alas, Bayani Agbayani, Arnold Reyes, Boy Abunda, Nora Aunor, Betchay Nakpil, Mama Nene Vera Perez, Che Singson, VP candidate Noli de Castro, Lani Mercado, Assunta de Rossi, Vic del Rosario and Daisy Romualdez

Glorious 'asalto' for Gloria

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by
Alex Van Hagen
on Kodak Max

GUESTS showed their political colors in the super-fun advance birthday bash for President **Macapagal Arroyo**, *palanggas*. The party was hosted by **Gina de Venecia** in her elegant home in Dasmariñas Village.

The entrance of the smiling, *tres* confident "La Presidente" drew exuberant cheers and applause from hot movie and television personalities. The indefatigable President wore a simple cobalt-blue pants in Thai silk, topped by a sheer gold jacket. Her only jewelry were her earrings, consisting of a single strand of pearls and a subtly dangling diamond.

Protocol took a backseat as GMA mixed and mingled with the *artistas*.

With red, white and blue balloons all over the place, the celebrator and her well-wishers took turns to *beso beso* and pose for the cameras.

The President's running mate, the so *simpatico* **Noli de Castro**, was present with his nice wife, **Arlyn**; they were were the objects of attention as well.

Social Welfare Secretary **Corazon "Dinky" Soliman**, chic as always in her ethnic-inspired attire, table-hopped and mingled with the stars.

The Man with "The Buzz," **Boy Abunda** , emceed the impromptu program with **Kris Aquino**.

The star-studded guest list included the multi-awarded, **Elizabeth Oropesa**; superstar **Nora Aunor**, whom GMA fondly called, "my *kakambal*"; *tres chic* couple, beautiful **Cherie Gil** and dashing **Romy Rogoff**; Viva Films big boss **Vic del Rosario**; coo-some couple, the hard-hitting **Luis Chavit Singson** and the stunning **Che Singson**; eye-catcher **Lani Mercado**;

GLORIOUS/ G2

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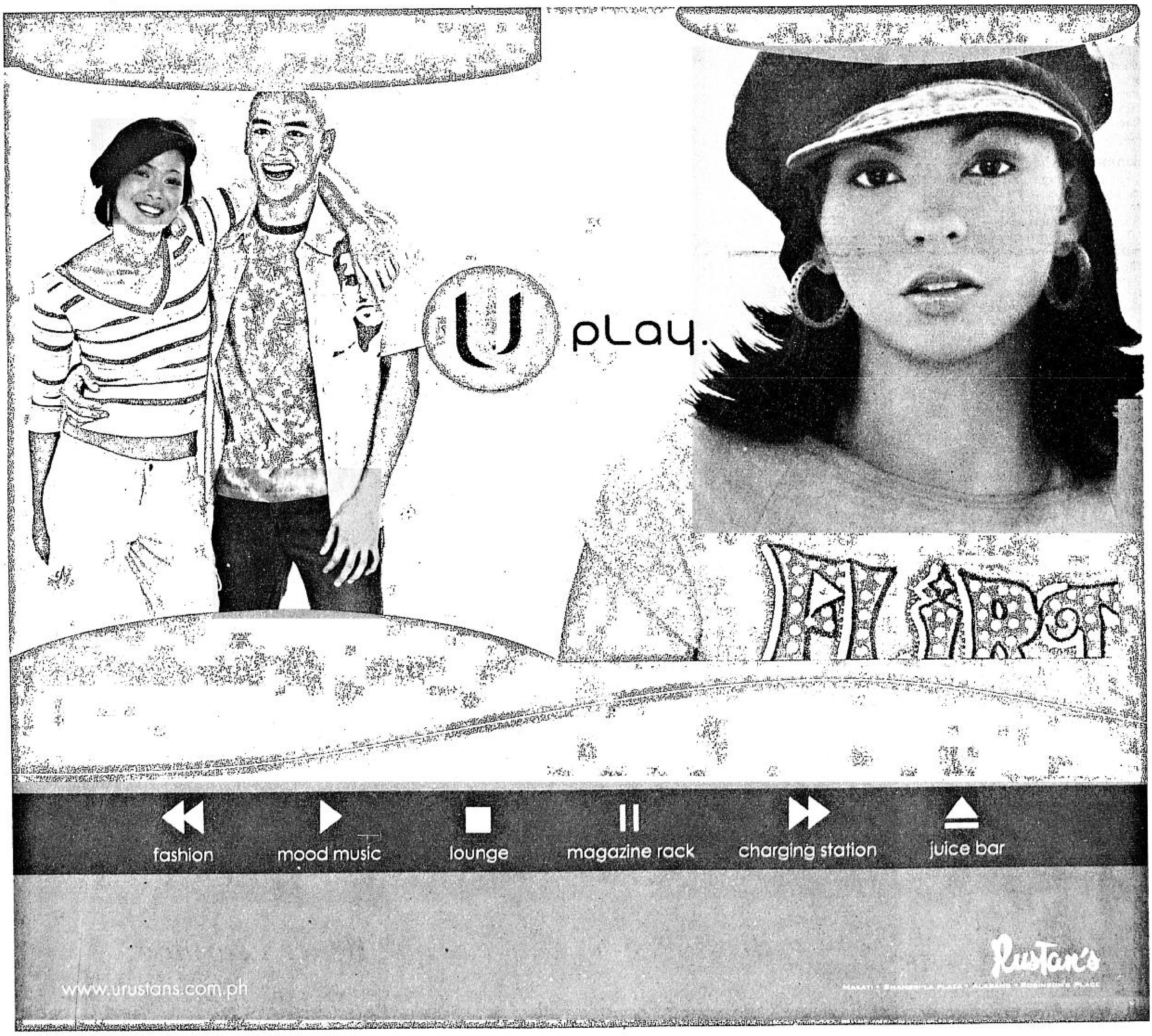

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WEARING GMA pins: (standing) Gina de Venecia and Arlyn de Castro pose with Anita Muhlach, Mama Nene Vera Perez and Elvie Gonzalez

THE BEAMING President with Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, Ai Ai de las Alas, Bayani Agbayani, Arnold Reyes, Nora Aunor and Boy Abunda

SOCIAL Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman

THE BIG THREE. The brains behind Vicki Belo's Skin—managing editor Liane Bautista, publisher Dondi Almario and of course, Dr. Vicki Belo

Glorious 'asalto' for Gloria

From page G1

and gorgeous **Assunta de Rossi** and her husband, Congressman **Jules Ledesma.**

Table-hopping were va-va-voom hunk **Albert Martinez** and macho actor **Cesar Montano**; they had the young and not-so-young women swooning over them.

Irrepressible **Ai-Ai de las Alas, Bayani Agbayani** and the inimitable **Elizabeth Ramsey**, who belted out "You Don't Know Me," had everyone in stitches. And natch, who could miss **Daisy Romualdez** and **Smokey Manaloto**? No one, *palanggas*.

Of course, flawless beauty **Dawn Zulueta** was the grand topic of conversation.

Aga's fun mom, **Anita Muhlach** , sat with her *balae*, **Elvie Gonzalez**, and Sampaguita Pictures founder, grand "mama" **Nene Vera Perez.** Gina's sister, **Betchay Nakpil**, couldn't be more pleased with the fun pack.

In her brief remarks, GMA thanked the entertainers for their best wishes (and votes?) and for taking the time out of their busy schedules to attend her "*asalto*."

The "Man of the House," Speaker **Joe de Venecia**, was absent. He was busy campaigning in Mindanao— for GMA *naturellement*!

Skin mag launch

Pour *moi, palanggas*, it was a fab night of glitz and super glamour as fireworks and feasting welcomed the newest baby of the successful Dr. **Vicki Belo**, Skin Magazine!

The no-holds-barred magazine is the first of its kind. And take note, it answers all your dermatological and body-enhancement questions so you can create that glowing, sexy, youthful look. A gallery of hot-hot stars reveal secrets to help you with your beauty choice.

Skin is published by tall and dashing **Dondi Almario**, the same gentleman who brought to our shores Philippine Tatler, Teen Magazine, and Gold, while eye-catching **Liane Bautista** is the managing editor, no less.

This *tres*, chi-chi soiree was hosted by the king of buzz himself, **Boy Abunda**, and our very own traffic-stopper, **Tessa Prieto Valdes**. They, my *palanggas*, kept us up and excited while we were being filmed by the paparazzi who couldn't keep their lenses off the famous and the beautiful—such as **Celine Lopez, Mons Tantoco** and gorgeous Dr. **Minguita Padilla.** They were busy trading beauty secrets with

GLORIOUS/ G3

LANA Asanin, Miriam Quiambao and Abbygale Arenas

BEAUTY AND BRAINS. ZsaZsa Padilla and Kris Aquino

DING Mercado

HANDSOME hunk Troy Montero

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BOY Abunda and Aubrey Miles help Dr. Belo blow the candles on her birthday cake.

SMILING beauties: Rica Peralejo and Belo PR manager Vangie Kua

CHRISTINE Bersola-Babao

TIMELESS beauties. Liza Lorena and beauty queen Margie Moran

DR. Vic Lopez with my favorite, TV's glam gal Ces Drilon

GREAT pals. Tessa Prieto Valdes and Joyce Jimenez

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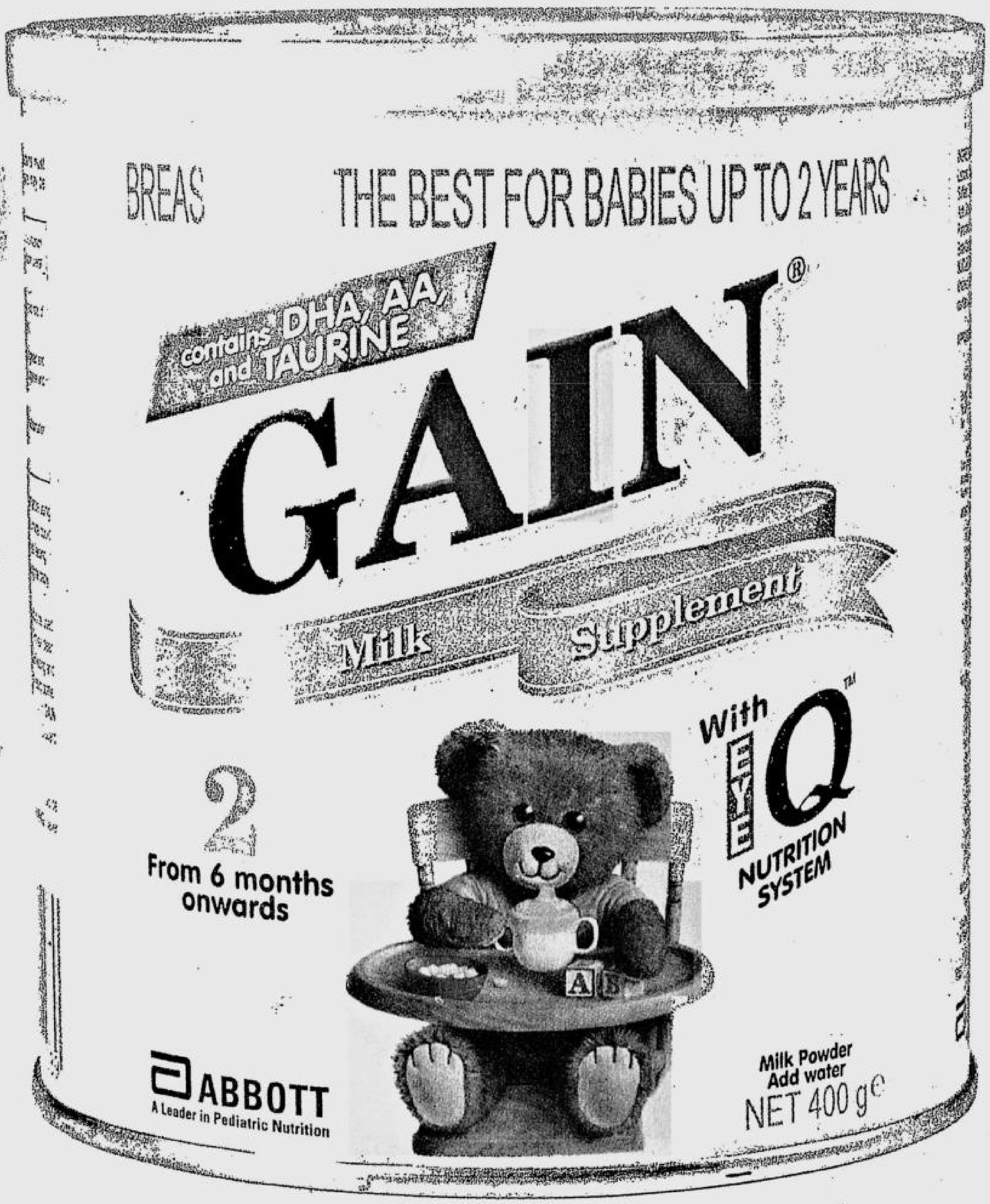

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PROUD parents Nena and Enrique Belo

From page G2

concert diva **Pops Fernandez**, sultry **Zsa Zsa Padilla** and super-radiant **Kris Aquino.**

Needless to say, the babes couldn't keep their rich eyes off the hunks such as **Troy Montero**, award-winning actor-director **Albert Martinez**, snazzy **Carlo Morales** and other ultra-handsome and sexy males, who escorted our Vicki around the party.

Other luscious beauties were **Aubrey Miles**, **Jenny Miller**, **Mylene Dizon**, **Rica Peralejo** and sunshine girl **Lana Asanin.**

And let's not forget our world-class beauties: **Margie Moran**, **Miriam Quiambao** and **Abbygale Arenas.**

One socialite told *moi*, "That's why I love Belo. It's a place where we women can reveal our figure and conceal our age." Now don't you just love this gal? I know I do.

There to congratulate my *palangga* Vicki, on the 14th anniversary of the phenomenal success story, the Belo Medical Group, were newlyweds **Christine Bersola** and **Julius Babao**, cozy twosome **Ara Mina** and **Jomari Yllana**, proud parents **Ike** and **Nena Belo**, **Laly Etroit**, **Ces Drilon**, eye-catching **Janine de Padua**, Mega's **Sari Yap**, and **Melanie Cuevas**. These beauties made this mega businessman comment, "Ahh, a thing of beauty, will keep you broke forever." Amen!

Souvenirs for this *tres* fantastic happening were glam samples of Dr. Belo's favorite things that guests could use to hopefully look better.

Singapore chic

The fantastic Singapore Fashion Festival 2004, superbly organized by the hard-to-beat Singapore Tourism Board, kept its promise to outdo previous installments.

Sadly *moi* didn't make it because of a previous engagement. But with such fashion luminaries as **Julien MacDowell**, **Colin McDowell**, **Zandra Rhodes** and brassy-classy **Christopher Bailey** adding dazzling fashion glitter to this year's super lineup, how could it have been anything but a smashing success, *palanggas*?

Local and international models sashayed down the ramps wearing the international collections, including, *naturellement*, a couple of upcoming Asian designers, like Singapore's **Jay Quek.**

I've witnessed past shows in Singapore, such as those of France's enfant terrible **Jean Paul Gaultier** and of Christian Dior and Kenzo. This year's show repeated the same tradition, bringing style to the already stylish city—state of Singapore.

STYLE in the city. Singapore's Fashion Festival 2004 was a knockout.

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Summer lovin' collection

DENIM blazer over yellow kate vest with polka-dot scarf, floral printed skirt, perforated belt, flat club bag, all from Topshop; checkered cap, blue visors, sleeveless top under blue western shirt, red star wristband, from Topman

WEAR the perfect outfits this summer—sexy and smart getups, yet comfortable enough to beat the heat. Topshop and Topman offer a collection inspired by the romance of summer nights.

For ladies, show your passion for the season in short or see-through threads and pretty bikini tops that can go beyond sun and sea. Wear them underneath standard pieces like hooded jackets and chiffon blouses to spice up your look.

You can also go fun and funky with a full floral skirt and a denim blazer. Boost the effect with accessories like a scarf, a wide belt and a little club bag. Or simply match a sleeveless top with a short pleated skirt.

For men, warm up to a hot date with clothes that can take you anywhere. Long-sleeved shirts are your staple, worn under a shirt in prints or stripes.

Summer also calls for a carefree style, like a Western-inspired shirt thrown over a sleeveless top or white tees under a sporty jacket. A nice-fitting boot-cut or flared jeans never fails to make a guy look cool in any season.

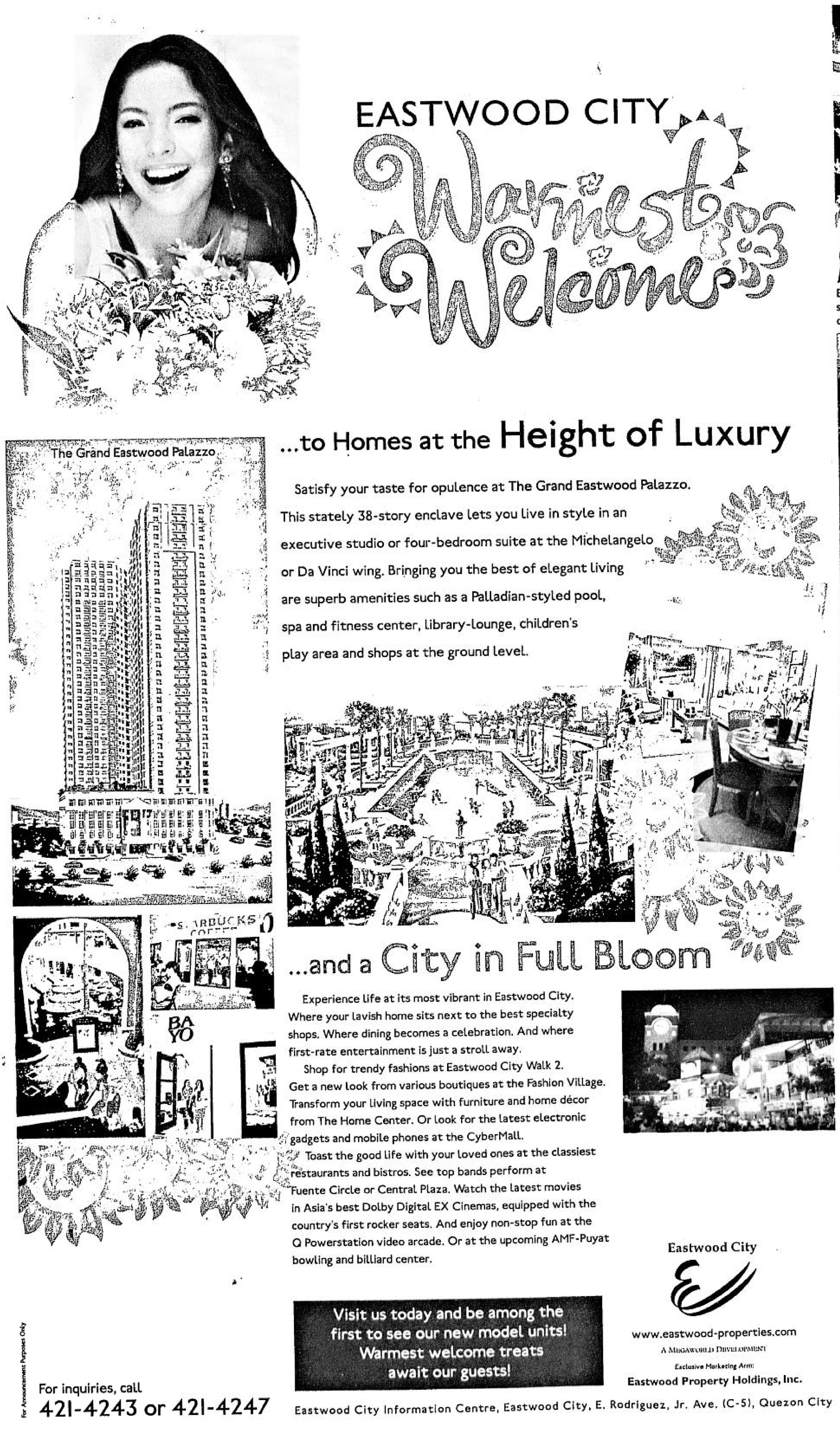
Check out Topshop's 2004 spring-summer collection at its stores in Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Glorietta 2 in Ayala Center and Alabang Town Center. Topman stores are located in Robinsons Place Manila and Robinsons Galleria.

BROWN visor white long-sleeve shirt under striped T-shirt, ripped boot-cut jeans, brown dispatch bag

SPOTTED bikini top under a green zip-through hoody, pleated denim skirt, mirror square belt, pink leather belt, red canvas bag

SPORTY long-sleeved zip-through over a white patched T-shirt paired with flared jeans, trucker cap

HEART-PRINT bikini under a '20s spotted chiffon top, cropped jeans with pink suede belt, pink cap, polka-dot bag



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